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THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

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THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

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TO MY WIFE

INTRODUCTION

The question will be asked, Why does not this book seek for the authority of Jesus in His teaching? Surely it is in the words of our Lord about the Kingdom of God, about His own place in it, and about the character of its citizens that we find guidance for ourselves.

This is true so far as it goes, but this book seeks to start a little further back, and has for its subject, not the formal teaching, but the inner mind, the personality of the Teacher.

Scholars of a great master have often told us that in process of time they discovered that he knew more than he taught, and implied more than he said. It was impossible to remember all his sayings, but it was impossible to forget, or to escape from, the influence of the man himself. Long after they left school or university, they found that their master's way of thinking was influencing, even directing, their own outlook on life. They confessed that the greatest factor in their education was the personality of their mental guide.

By common consent, Jesus is one of the great teachers of the world. Christians count Him supreme and alone. His personal disciples spoke much about Him, and they passed on, to disciples of their own, material, ample and trustworthy, for the short memoirs of our Lord which we now possess in the Four Gospels. These, taken together, give to the unbiassed reader a well-defined picture of the Master Himself. Much of what He said and did was unrecorded, and is now lost. But we can see the way in which He looked at things, the thoughts that were in His mind about God and men, and the principles by which He regulated His life. The letters of the New Testament, written for the most part to deal with local and passing situations, show how deeply the Personality of Jesus had influenced their writers. In those letters surprisingly little reference is made to words or deeds of His, but the principles He laid down are applied to circumstances very different from those in which He lived.

Christians claim for Jesus final authority in every age. "The teachings of the Gospel live and move and have their being in a plane of their own. Its principles are sufficient to guide conduct in every walk of life. . . .

If ever its spirit pervades a whole nation, it will be a Christian nation as none has ever yet been."* Words like these are, in effect, a claim for the sovereignty of Jesus. On what is this claim based? It is to be noted that arguments which, with force, formerly showed cause for His claim, do not appeal to our age. We find ourselves in a position for which living memory, and indeed history, has no precedent. If Christ is to be the Guide of our day, we need a stronger light in which to see Him.

Some while ago, His claims were advanced on the ground of the beauty of His teaching. But while our time has ideals, they cannot be classed under this heading. The eclipse of such teachers of the Beautiful as Tennyson or the Pre-Raphaelites, shows that it is not for a "sweetness and light" ideal that men are now in quest. Equally futile is it to base His authority on His miraculous power. The whole world cries, "Force is no remedy." Moreover an age which has wrung such secrets from Nature—within and without ourselves—is not inclined to listen to anyone merely on the ground of his ability to do wonders. Like Pharaoh's magicians, we may ourselves be able to do similar things to-morrow.

* Bryce, "Modern Democracies."

Yet with all its resources and achievements, our day is like "the rich who want something more; the sick who want something different; the traveller who says, Anywhere but here."* It is especially in the sphere of morals that we are all at sea. Our fathers counted such ideas as the rights of nations and individuals, the sanctity of marriage, the stability of the social order, to be fixed as the courses of the stars. Now such things are the very questions at issue. Our ideas of right and wrong have been rudely shaken up by the exigencies of War and of Settlement. We do not know where we are.

The real trouble is that we have forgotten how to love. Is there anyone who can teach us? If he is to do this, he must begin by doing it himself. We must see love in action; love, with all its implications, working out in every part of a life passed under human conditions. He must go further, and show us that love lies at the very heart of things, that it is the basis on which all order and well-being are built up. He must be able to assure us that God is love. But the first necessity is that such an one should show us that love can be reduced to "practical politics"; first must come

* Quoted from Morley's Essay on Emerson.

example—then we may be able to accept the precept.

This book affirms that Jesus is that example of love in action. In its study, it begins with His training at Nazareth. It goes on to watch Him surrounded by the busy, excitable, suffering crowds of Galilee and Judæa. It sees Him as Teacher and Friend within His own inner circle. From His relations with men, it turns to His inner thought of God. And it closes with His supreme claim to a unique authority, the authority of the Most High, based on His power to forgive sins. If the study is adequate, Jesus is seen as the Eternal Lover, the only one who can lead the world of to-day from hatred to love, from unrest to peace, from doubt to God.

In thus endeavouring to understand the mind of Jesus, the position is here taken that the Fourth Gospel gives us material as indispensable and as reliable as do the Synoptists. A word must be said in vindication of this belief.

Shortly after 150 A.D. we find a tradition connecting this Gospel with St. John. We gather that it was believed to have been written by him in his old age, probably at Ephesus. Historical criticism has been busy for nearly

one hundred years with this tradition. Certainty has not yet been reached, but it appears reasonable to say that, though St. John himself may not be the author, it was written by one of his own disciples, who was familiar with John's teaching about Jesus on the one hand, and the dangers that threatened the Church of his place and time on the other. Those dangers were seen in the Docetic heresy which affirmed that the humanity of our Lord was only an appearance and a sham. Holding, as he did, the universal belief of the Church that Jesus was Divine, he wrote his gospel in defence of the statement of the Prologue that, while "the Word was God," He had "become flesh and pitched His tent among us." The writer was probably familiar with the other three Gospels, or at least with that of Mark, and supplements their information. The lapse of time, long meditation on the Saviour's Person, and the force of local conditions, together with a desire not to go too much over ground already covered, are considerations which account for the peculiarities of the Gospel. It is an example of the way in which a scholar works out the things his teacher implied. My own conviction is twofold. First, that the Fourth Gospel is, in origin

though not in date, as near to Jesus as are the Synoptists* : and second, that given the Jesus of the three Gospels, it was inevitable that another of His disciples, who had applied the preaching of the Kingdom to the problems of the pagan world, should undertake to show his Master's universal significance. A missionary once told me that a Brahmin understood the Fourth more readily than the other Gospels. A Greek of the second century might say of Mark—This is interesting, but what has it to do with me? The Fourth Gospel brings Jesus out of Palestine into the world.

The latest writer of authority on the subject, speaking of the way in which the comprehensive idea of the Logos was built up in this Gospel, sums up the position thus : " I cannot understand the process as a whole, unless for its foundation and starting-point it had great utterances of Jesus concerning His unique communion and fellowship with the Father, and knowledge of the Father's mind ; and concerning His mission to make known to men, through His teaching and life of Ministry and Death, with a fulness and clearness that were

* Moffatt, " Introduction to New Testament," p. 540, says that to take the *entweder-oder* (either one or the other) attitude with regard to the trustworthiness of John and of the Synoptists, is now out of date, or nearly so.

altogether new, the Father's Character and Will." The quotation is from Professor V. H. Stanton's "Gospels as Historical Documents," Part III (Cambridge University Press, 1920), to which I must refer the student who wishes to know on what arguments the statement is made. Those who desire a less expensive Manual, should consult Professor Peake's "Critical Introduction to the New Testament" (Williams and Norgate, 1909).

Study of any sort is often made easier by the help of one's friends. I am indebted to many, but especially to Mr. Basil Mathews, and the Rev. Hugh Martin, to whose encouragement and expert advice I owe more than can be expressed.

London,
December, 1921.

N.B.—In the footnotes, the abbreviation M.V.="The Vocabulary of the New Testament, illustrated from the Papyri," etc., by Drs. J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan. (Only Parts 1-4 are published to date.)

Chapter I

JESUS AT NAZARETH

Society has freed the individual from other ties, but not from the tie which binds him to the social life."—Hobhouse, "Morals in Evolution," Vol. I., p. 363.

It is not unnatural that we should wish to know something more than we are told in the Gospels of the early life of Jesus. Yet how few are the references to it. We have two stories of His birth and childhood, but what of the critical and formative years between the ages of twelve and thirty? What were the influences that played upon and moulded the character of Jesus? Luke must have known something about this, but he says nothing. Mark (the earliest of the four evangelists) plunges *in medias res*, and without reference to the infancy or youth of Jesus, begins with the opening of His ministry. Yet it is Mark who supplies the one word which breaks the silence that reigns over the adolescence and young manhood

of our Lord. In telling us that Jesus spent those years as "the carpenter,"* he drops a key with which we may unlock many doors which would otherwise remain closed to us.

The years between twelve and thirty, then, we may call the years of silence. But this reference tells us that they were spent by Jesus as a worker. The greater part of His life was passed right in the midst of men. The Galilee of two thousand years ago hummed with activity. Its population was largely Gentile, in close touch with the busy seaport of Tyre and with the market of Damascus. Its industry was, for the most part, agricultural, though such primitive manufactures as the times required would have their place—perhaps more so than in Jerusalem. Nazareth was a typical Galilean village. Although it lay a little off the great trade roads, its site made it a fine post of observation. As the view from its outskirts " is a map of Old Testament history,"† so it presented a chronicle of current activity. " Jerusalem pilgrims, Egyptian caravans, Roman legions and princes' retinues, all passed within sight,"‡ and an intelligent youth would learn

* Mark vi. 3, cf. Luke iv. 22, John vi. 42: " Is not this Joseph's son ? " and Matt. xiii. 55, " Is not this the carpenter's son ? "

† " Historical Geography of the Holy Land," by G. A. Smith, p. 433.

‡ " Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels," art. " Nazareth."

tidings of the world as he watched the endlessly moving picture.

In such a community as this, Jesus, like Joseph before Him, pursued the trade of village carpenter. Everyone needs a carpenter at some time, and to His workshop all sorts of people would come. The builder needing beams for his roof, the farmer asking for shafts for his plough, the drover wanting a yoke for his oxen, would all find their way to the bench at which Jesus worked. In the leisure which is, or was, a feature of the East, Jesus would learn from His neighbours the conditions under which they lived. He would know, possibly at first hand, the bite of poverty and the shadow cast by the fear of want. The speech of the people became His own, and thus He would understand the point of view from which the " common people " looked at things. There is no wonder that in after days they recognised this, and that, in consequence, " the mass of the people listened with delight to Him " (Mark xii. 37).

His intercourse would be with others beside the workers of the village. The Rabbi of the Synagogue would have many opportunities to talk with Him, not only when He, as a boy, sat and learned the precepts of the

Law, but in later manhood as He worked at His trade. The merchant, travelling in search of goodly pearls, might well have been a visitor at His door. To many a political discussion, so dear to the ardent Galilean, would Jesus listen as men gathered after the day's work was done. One can well imagine that the boys and girls of Nazareth would stop to hear the stories Jesus could tell, long before He laid down His tools for the last time.

All this is not mere fancy. The key that Mark has dropped enables us to explain the knowledge of the customs of trade and of common life displayed by Jesus in His parables. The hills round Nazareth were clad with vineyards, and He had seen the labourers being hired in the time of the vintage (Matt. xx. 1ff) He knew the ways of the village money-lender (Matt. xviii. 28ff). Through the open door He could see the sower broad-casting the seed on all sorts of soil (Matt. xiii. 3). As a carpenter, He knew the difference—as some modern carpenters seem not to know—between seasoned and unseasoned wood,* and in the figure of Matthew vii. 3, He may have thought

* Luke xxiii. 31: "If they do these things when the wood is green, what shall be done when it is dry?" ξύλον almost always in N.T. (save in Apoc.) means not a tree, but timber, or something made of timber.

of the danger of flying splinters that would be incidental to His work. One cannot think that Jesus would be unaffected in mind and in speech by the experiences of some eighteen years of work at His trade, and if we can find traces of this in His teaching, it is but one other indication of His wide sympathy with men as they are.

"Touched with fellow-feeling" (Heb. iv. 15). That is the considered verdict passed by one of the greatest Christian thinkers upon the earthly life of our Lord. It is the impression left upon the mind of any careful student of the Gospels. Jesus is represented as One who in common life learned and practised a large-hearted sympathy, a wise and discerning insight, and a tender but mighty strength. Yet what a distorted thought the vast majority of people to-day have about Him. Nearly all the witnesses cited in the volume published on "The Army and Religion," agree that men generally think of Jesus as far removed from them, One whose life and teaching have little in common with the conditions under which they themselves have to work and live. To them He is :

> "A dead fact stranded on the shore
> Of the oblivious years."

On the other hand, the Gospels represent Him as One who, by every-day experience, knew men's temptations, and the severity of their conditions. Only such an One could have pronounced the "Neither do I condemn thee" of John viii. 11. Only of such an One could St. Paul have predicated the perfect blending of sound judgment with tender mercy which he sees to be so prominent a feature in the character of his Lord.* Only such an One could have issued the call of Matthew xi. 28 to the world's toilers—in such sharp contrast to the scornful description of the luxury of which He had spoken in verse 8—"Come unto me, all ye that labour. Take my yoke upon you. Ye shall find rest to your souls." It was His living contact with God on the one side and with the realities of life on the other that accounted for the absence of harshness in the character of Jesus. His insight was so sympathetic that it enabled Him to understand. And men knew that He understood.

We must, however, be careful to put all the lines into the picture. The witnesses in the evidence referred to above† tell us that the

* 2 Cor. x. 1: The word here is ἐπιείκεια, a word signifying generosity joined with fair judgment.

† "Army and Religion," chap. iii.

average man thinks of Jesus as effeminate. He does not connect the qualities of heroism, self-forgetfulness and sacrificial love, nor the virtues of righteous indignation, even-handed justice and straightforward truthfulness, with the teaching of Jesus as their source. How different is the Gospel portrait! Mark calls Jesus "The Carpenter," and the word he uses means a skilled workman,* and carries a suggestion of pride in good work. You remember the scene in the opening chapter of "Adam Bede." The clock had hardly struck the first stroke of six, when Adam's companions in the shop threw down their tools. "Look there, now!" said Adam indignantly, "I can't abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way, the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work, and was afraid o' doing a stroke too much. . . . I hate to see a man's arms drop down as if he were shot, before the clock's fairly struck, just as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in's work." One may be sure that that is the spirit which moved Jesus to speak of the value of the second mile (Matt. v. 41). And His stern condemnation of hypocrisy is only the other

* It is worth while to remember that τέκτων is wider than "carpenter." (M.V.)

side of His love of good work for Himself, and the eagerness with which He sought to call it out in others, both in character and in craft (Matt. xxv. 21, 23, 26).

But those eighteen years which Jesus spent as a workman were not barren of the finer things of life. In the fuller story of His ministry nothing impresses one more than His ability to make a space around His spirit. If the crowd throngs Him on the lake-shore, there is always " the other side " to which He can cross, to be alone with His disciples. If " leisure so much as to eat " (Mark vi. 31) is denied to Him by the demands of busy days, the quiet mountain-side and the star-lit night shall open for Him the gates of prayer. It is a great art this, the art of making room for the things that matter most, and Jesus learned the secret at Nazareth. Lacking this secret, men find refuge from the weariness and monotony of work in dissipation, or at best, in amusement that makes no demand on brain or nerve. But note what surprise lies under the question of His countrymen when Jesus emerges into public life. " Whence hath this man these things ? " and, " What is the wisdom that is given unto this man ? " (Mark vi. 2). Later on, in Jerusalem, " the Jews marvelled at Him,

saying 'How knoweth this man letters, never having learned?'" * The very form of the questions implies that they had seen only one-half of His life. His skill as a craftsman they knew. They knew also that His life had been a full and busy one. Of His stern self-discipline, of His determination to make Himself fit to do His Father's business, they knew nothing. For in all His occupation He had found time for study. The Rabbi of the Nazareth Synagogue could have told them something of the keenness with which Jesus set Himself to learn to read, and to understand, the Rolls of the Old Testament,† but such study was not pursued in the public eye. The probability is that He could speak in at least three languages, Hebrew, the Common Greek, and Aramaic. The ability to think in a language other than one's own adds to mental alertness, and to this day the quickness of our Lord's repartee takes away one's breath. His keenest powers He exercised in study, and it

* John vii. 15. *μὴ μεμαθηκώς*. Xenophon uses the word about scholars of some well-known teacher. The Jews may have meant "Of what Rabbi's school is this man a pupil?" cf. Herford, "Pharisaism," p. 138.

† Of the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, there are quotations or reminiscences of more than one half in St. Matthew alone. This is without reckoning those introduced by the evangelist and not spoken by Jesus. Deuteronomy, Psalms, and the Servant-section of Isaiah are the most frequent—a fact of the deepest significance for the student of our Lord's inner life.

was in the Scriptures that He was most learned. It has been said that he who knows his Bible is a man of liberal education. Never was the word more finely illustrated than in the case of Jesus, and it was from His Father's Book, His people's Book, that the Carpenter of Nazareth made the best of His mental furniture.

Neither did He neglect the furnishing of the soul. His habits of prayer were among the earliest things that His intimates noted in Jesus. Nothing of the mysteries and nothing of the practice of prayer were unknown to Him when His ministry began, and His knowledge was gained by long patience during the years that preceded it. If Brother Lawrence made an Oratory of his kitchen, we may be sure that Jesus often prayed at His bench and over His work. It is an illuminating word which the Epistle to the Hebrews connects with the praying of our Lord. In it, says the author, "He learned obedience," and if one goes to the root of the word rendered "obedience"* the sentence reads, "He learned how to listen." No one is so free as the man who has thus developed the resources of his soul. For him there is

> "Central peace
> Subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

* Heb. v. 8 (ὑπακοή).

"Be not anxious"; "peace I leave with you"; "fear not, little flock"; "come unto me and I will give you rest." These, and other like words, fall like the shadow of a great rock on the fainting soul; and He who uttered them had learned their secret in the leisure-spaces which He made for time to pray.

One other thing must be said about these years of silence. In them Jesus found time and opportunity for the study of human nature. It is a matter for good cheer that He found it so well worth studying. Never in His ministry did He assume that anyone was worthless till he was proved so. While reckoning little or nothing of differences of social position, sex or possessions, He showed the greatest wisdom in His knowledge and treatment of each individual. The roots of His knowledge lay deeper than we can estimate, but we can safely say that, both in business and in the social life of Nazareth, our Lord treated no one merely as a "customer" or a "case." He needed not that anyone should teach Him, for He knew what was in man (John ii. 25), and that sure touch with which He healed the souls of those who sought His help, was, at least to some extent, gained in His years of training at Nazareth.

In a certain college in India students are trained for the Indian Christian Ministry. Many of them are children of parents who were rescued and sheltered by European missionaries. The consequence is that the students have themselves been doubly sheltered, and, before they go out to preach to their countrymen, it has been found necessary to teach them the elements of the religion of their own people, lest they should lack understanding of the view-point of those whom they are to evangelise. But never did Jesus dwell in the seclusion of a school, nor was academic training necessary for Him. "That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17), and that "likeness" was one of the things which enabled people to recognise instinctively and immediately the authority, born of sympathy, with which He taught.

Chapter II

JESUS, THE MASTER

"My will is not my own
Till Thou hast made it Thine;
If it would reach a monarch's throne
It must its crown resign:
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife,
When on Thy bosom it has leant,
And found in Thee its life."—Matheson.

One cannot help being impressed by the fact that whenever men talked with Jesus they seemed naturally to assume a second place. Nicodemus may have come in the rôle of the superior critic, or the candid friend, but he was not long in discovering that there were many truths of which he was ignorant. Pilate, who at first regarded Jesus with a complete absence of any personal interest, soon found himself torn between conscience and expediency, and his efforts to escape the dilemma show that he clearly recognised the moral

supremacy of the Prisoner at his bar.* If any one might have been expected to meet Jesus as an equal it was John the Baptist: but their contact brought John's confession, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). What was the secret of this mastery?

1. Jesus as Master of Himself.

Our study of His life at Nazareth has shown that Jesus submitted to a very lengthy period of preparation. Did He never strain at the leash? Did He never feel a longing to be up and at His life-work? And such a work! Did its prospect never set His heart beating faster, because the word He had come to proclaim was as a fire in His bones? Were not thirty years of preparation out of all proportion to three years of activity? If such thoughts ever occurred to Him, they left no trace upon the fixity of His purpose. His must have been a massive strength of self-control.

Some people say that Jesus knew from His early years what He would do. But if at Nazareth He submitted to a Heavenly guidance which He did not fully understand, there came

* The psychology of Pilate at the Trial Scene is worthy of careful study. With Mark (xv. 1-15) as the starting-point, compare Matt. xxvii. 1, 2, 11-18, 20-23, 26, and Luke xxiii. 1-3, 18-25. These accounts give the facts, as they would appear to an observer. The Fourth Gospel gives us glimpses behind the scenes. See John xviii. 28-xix. 16.

a time when He did understand, and gave deliberate consent to His Father's plan. He told the story of the crisis afterwards to His disciples. He pictured Satan* as taking Him to the pinnacle of the Temple, and saying "Cast Thyself down"—"Let men see the angels bearing thee up in their hands. Paralyse them into belief in Thee." It was a temptation often repeated, always rejected.† So steady was His aim, so profound His confidence, that He never gave a hint of hurry, and no emergency found Him at a loss. In spite of all disappointments and provocation, His tone has no shade of vindictiveness or even impatience. His life with the Twelve was of the most intimate kind, but only once are we told that any of them tried to correct Him, and even this outburst is to be attributed to a love that could not bear the thought of the Cross. The rebuke which Jesus administered to Peter showed that He regarded His disciple's mistake as an act of trespass on His Father's purpose, and the error was never repeated (Mark viii. 31-34).

If the respect of His friends was so complete, no less complete was the homage of His

* Mark i. 12, 13; Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1-13.

† Our Lord constantly refused to allow His miraculous power to be used, either by Himself or by others, for compelling belief in Him. Cf. Mark i. 44, Matt. xii. 38ff, and "Pastor Pastorum," p. 142.

foes. Sometimes it was unconscious; always it was mingled with fear. We know how they watched Him. To the very end, they give proof that they could never feel safe until He was dead. Read in the light of all the circumstances of His time, the life of Jesus leaves us with a picture of One who had vast forces in reserve. He Himself spoke of "twelve legions of angels" who waited for His word. But the word was never spoken, and the silence of our Lord before Pilate and Herod is a proof, not of His helplessness, but of His perfect mastery of Himself.

He was Master because He was Servant. When we speak of our Lord as the Son of God, we are sometimes apt to lose sight of the moral significance of the term. It implies submission, obedience. The Sonship of Christ is not merely a theological idea, it is an essential fact if we are to think rightly about God. It saves Christianity from being a tritheistic religion. In our modern emphasis on the Person and Work of Jesus, there is danger lest we drift into sentimentalism, by forgetting that which is the strength of the New Testament teaching —that God is all in all. Something like this lies behind our Lord's reply to the young ruler— "Why callest thou me good—there is none

good but One, even God" (Mark x. 18). "I am the Way," He said, but the Way is not the ultimate goal. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," means that faith, to be complete, must be faith in God (John xiv. 6-10).

The secret of our Lord's self-mastery is to be found just here. He was the Servant-Son. To its last detail the Will of God was His will. "I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me." The frequent occurrence of that phrase, "him that sent me" marks His sense of Mission and Vocation.* Everything that would interfere with the fulfilment of His mission, or hindered the response to His vocation, was put on one side. He took no holiday from duty; His very meat and drink was to do His Father's will—"the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" This metaphor,† so often used by Jesus, shows that His obedience applied to choice of methods as well as of general principles. Dominion over all the kingdoms of the world was precisely the object for which He came, but it was not to be won by falling down

* See below, ch. viii.

† Cf. the suggestive article "Cup" in "Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels."

and worshipping him who had usurped it. No "short cut," no easy way which did not coincide with whole-hearted acceptance of God's will was for a moment to be entertained. Against all such inducements Jesus stood like a rock.

To speak thus of Jesus as the Servant-Son of God, is to indicate in another way His perfect union with God. It is a union of love, and that meant a union of Nature. "I and my Father are One." "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is save the Son" (Luke x. 22). Jesus spoke of His relation with God in such a way as to give His enemies cause to say that He made Himself equal with God (John v. 18; x. 33). His sense of filial union with the Father gave Him unlimited strength. Though He had not where to lay His head, we see no trace of that worry about the necessities of life which cripples so many good people. Still less was He anxious for life's margins and superfluities—an anxiety even more dangerous than that which arises from want. For His Father's work He relied on His Father's resources, and He was thus set free at every point to work out His Father's purposes. His consciousness of

being at one with God made Him completely Master over all His own desires and plans and needs (cf. Matt. vi. 33).

2. Jesus as Master of Nature.

We must not forget that the filial union between our Lord and His Father is represented in the New Testament as a union that goes all the way. It explains His obedience, and therefore His distinction from the Father. It explains His Sonship, and therefore His distinction from men. If we could see all that it means, it would explain to us in what sense He is both God and man. It already makes clear to faith that He could be no other than Lord of the world in which He lived and moved. Jesus, the Servant-Son, is Master of Nature. In this connection we are brought face to face with the question of miracles.

Nature is not self-caused, and does not exist for itself alone. It is one of the many expressions of the thought of God. He, therefore, Who is one with God will use Nature as God does, and for the same ends. Being what He was, it was inevitable that Jesus should, on needful occasions, exhibit what men called super-natural power. But what do we mean by the "super-natural"? No term

is more open to misconstruction. What is super-natural to men is natural to God.* Jesus Himself said that if human unbelief were eliminated, the sphere of the " possible " would be indefinitely enlarged.† That is only another way of saying that perfect faith links up with the creative and recreative power of God which is always and everywhere present in Nature. And when we are thinking of Jesus, the Servant-Son of God, it would be a miracle indeed if He had not worked miracles !

Bearing this carefully in mind, we can regard quite calmly the modern theory that some of the cures of Jesus were wrought by natural means. The popular mind was greatly excited by the healing of the man sick with paralysis (Mark ii. 1-12), but Jesus showed no such emotion. He simply brought to bear on the man's faith the recreative power of God which stood waiting for His use. The stilling of the storm shows an extension of the same principle. Compare these two passages :

> *Mark iv.* 37-39. And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling. And he himself was in the stern,

* Paterson, " Rule of Faith," pp. 331, 332.

† Mark ix. 23 ; cf. John xiv. 12.

asleep on the cushion : and they awake him and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish ? And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still ! And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

Gen. i. 2-3. And the earth was waste and void : and darkness was upon the face of the deep : and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light ! And there was light.

In both stories there is manifest the presence of the same creative force. In each there moves the spirit of God. Each is as supernatural, each is as natural, as the other. So far from the miraculous being impossible, it was, in our Lord's case, inevitable, for His union with God was so perfect that the distinction which we make between the supernatural and the natural had little meaning for Him. We may perhaps put the matter more clearly by saying that not only did He use the creative power of God for the fulfilling of His Father's will, but that in Him that power dwelt bodily.* From this point of view we understand why

* Col. ii. 9 : "In Christ the entire fulness of the Godhead abides for ever, having united itself with man by taking a human body" (Lightfoot's paraphrase).

our Lord seems to treat only two classes of action as strictly miraculous, that is, possible only to God. The one is the forgiveness of sins, of which we must speak later.* The other is Resurrection from the dead.

When we speak of Resurrection as a miracle, possible only to the direct action of the Deity, we do not merely confine our thought to our Lord's personal rising from the dead. "This is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life: and *I will raise him up* at the last day." "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me" (John vi. 40, 57). Our Lord's identification of Himself with "the living Father" is unique, and it is so expressly and definitely. And because of this unique Oneness with the Father, the creative power of God that dwells in Him in such unique fashion and degree He will use to raise up those who, in their turn, are identified with Himself by faith. This Oneness with God is not open to those who are "merely human," and from the "merely human" standpoint Resurrection is, and must ever be, miraculous.

* Chap. xi. end.

The Apostles and Evangelists saw that this applies, with added force, to the Resurrection of Jesus Himself. Sometimes they say that God raised Him up. Sometimes they represent Him as saying that after three days He would rise again.* So fully did the creative power of the living Father dwell in Jesus, that to His immediate followers the miracle lay, not so much in the physical fact that the pangs of death should have let him go—"*it was not possible* that he should be holden of them"†—as in the spiritual wonder of Divine Love that could offer its life as an atonement for sin. In the last resort the New Testament miracle always asserts the dignity and supremacy of the spiritual factor in any given case (cf. Luke xiii. 15, 16). So, by the Resurrection, Jesus, who is the incarnation of life at its fullest, is marked out as Master of the whole world over which Death was supposed to be supreme (Acts xiii. 30-40; Hebrews ii. 14, 15).

3. Jesus as Master of Men.

In all the Gospel narratives there is not one instance of a man who treated Jesus with indifference. Some people, like Herod, may

* Acts iii. 14; Mark viii. 31; cf, John x. 18.

† Acts ii. 24.

have been excited by so low a motive as curiosity (Luke xxiii. 8); some, like the men of the Samaritan village who refused Him a lodging, may have turned a deaf ear to Him because He was bent on projects with which they did not agree (Luke ix. 53); many, of course, were bitterly hostile to Him—but we do not read of any man who came into any sort of relation with Him and remained unenlisted for or against Him. Taken by itself, Mark ix. 40, "He that is not against us is for us," might be read as an approval of benevolent neutrality, but the context rules this out, and the idea is further blocked by the stronger word of Matthew xii. 30, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

The secret of His power over men might, by the unthinking, be attributed to the wisdom and beauty of His speech, or to some magnetism which attracted or repelled, as the case might be. But those who treated Him seriously felt that His secret was that He knew more about God than any other of whom they had ever heard. They might be friends or foes, but their attitude to Jesus was determined by their attitude to God. Conscience, "stabbed broad awake" by His word, told them that He

was right, and made the choice for or against God inevitable. Our Lord's perfect union with God made Him Master of men.

The challenging authority of Jesus is nowhere more clearly marked than in His charge to the Twelve Apostles (Matt. x. 37, 38). "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me." Herein He shows the quality of His mastery. "Not worthy"—why? In the first place, because He never asked men to do what He Himself refused to do. In St. Paul's appeal to Corinth for a generous contribution for the poor at Jerusalem, he uses this argument with great force. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."* Jesus claimed from His followers a love and obedience that should have its spring in His own example. This is wonderfully brought out in St. John's account of the washing of the disciples' feet.†

* 2 Cor. viii. 9. A similar argument is used in Phil ii. 5ff; 1 Peter ii. 18-25.

† John xiii. 1-17.

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper . . . and took a towel, and began to wash the disciples' feet . . . And he said to them, If I, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you."

In the second place, Jesus never used His Mastery to break a man's will. The rich man who came asking the way to eternal life, found Christ's road too rough, and turned back "sorrowful." As any one can see who reads the story in Mark,* his refusal caused even greater sorrow to Jesus. But He did not call him back. If He claimed submission, it was submission to God, and submission by consent. This is what the New Testament means by faith. Only such faith is "worthy" of Jesus. Only Jesus is worthy to be Master of such faith.

* Mark x. 17-22, and especially verse 21.

Chapter III

THE EDUCATION OF THE DISCIPLES

"The noble love of Jesus impels a man to do great things, and stirs him up to be always longing for what is more perfect.

"He that is not prepared to suffer all things, and to stand to the will of his Beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover.

"A lover ought to embrace willingly all that is hard and distasteful for the sake of his Beloved; and not to turn away from Him on account of any contradictions."

—Thomas à Kempis.

The Mastery of Jesus is most apparent in the circle in which intimacy was closest. We turn therefore to the records of His dealings with His disciples. The words which the Gospel writers use to describe the relation between them are helpful. The Twelve would need guidance, and so He is called their Leader*: they were learners in the gymnasium of life, and He is their Overseer,† one who

* καθηγητής (once only, Matt. xxiii. 10). In modern Greek the word = "Professor."

† ἐπιστάτης (Luke only). Moulton-Milligan's "Vocabulary of New Testament" quotes authorities to show that this term was used by Greek youths in addressing their trainers in the gymnasium.

watched over their training. But first and foremost they were scholars, and Jesus is almost always *Teacher*.* The word is a translation of the Hebrew Rabbi,† but the evangelists saw that He was more than a Jewish Teacher ever was to his pupils. The new study of Dr. Moulton and Dr. Milligan and their school has shown us that this word has a reference to *apprenticeship*, and in the best sense the Twelve were apprentices to Jesus. Let us study the development of one of them, marking, as we do so, the stages by which the Lord led him to efficiency.‡

"Follow thou me." It was the first word that Jesus spoke to Peter. He spoke it again when Peter's training was half-way through. And it was the Lord's last word to him.

(1) Our Lord's first word to Peter called for his personal allegiance—"Follow me!" There are two accounts of Peter's call. The one is given by Matthew and Mark, with Luke differing somewhat in time and circumstance,

* διδάσκαλος.

† In the Synoptist accounts this is the word Judas uses (Matt. xxvi. 25, 49; Mark xiv. 45). The other disciples use it only twice (Mark ix. 5, xi. 21).

‡ Of course, the most common term used in addressing our Lord is κύριος, "Lord." It is often merely equivalent to our "Sir." For a discussion as to its relation to the O.T. Jehovah, see Sanday and Headlam on Rom i. 4, and M.V., Pt. 4.

the other by John.* Let us look at the Synoptic account first, though it comes later in time. It is significant that we only read of Jesus calling busy men, and Peter is introduced to us as a fisherman at work. Jesus uses His work as a parable by which to issue a call to a larger spiritual service. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."† In that word Jesus showed Peter that it was no easy task to which he was called. There would be toil and danger; days and nights of disappointment; now a great "catch" as at Pentecost, and now a fruitless vigil. He would have to learn new methods; an unfamiliar patience would be required. But all this was overshadowed by the lure of the word, "Follow me." Jesus was the Master Fisherman, and from the moment that Peter dropped his net and stepped out on the shore, leaving all behind him, he was Christ's man. "*Caught*"—our Lord's own word exactly describes what had happened.

But was it all so sudden as this? Luke, varying from his fellow writers, with perhaps

* Matt. iv. 18-22, Mark i. 16-20, Luke v. 1-3, 10, 11, John i. 40-42. It is interesting to note that, at the time of their call, Peter is fishing, John is mending, or perhaps folding, the nets. It is an unintentional symbol of their after careers.

† The figure does not occur again in N.T. But for St. Luke's ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν ("thou shalt catch men alive") see 2 Tim. ii. 26.

more accurate information at his disposal, throws light on the story. He tells us of the Preaching and the draught of fishes. The wonder strikes fear and conviction into Peter's heart. With a vague perception of the greatness of the Person who sits in his boat, he cries out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." "Fear not"—the word which the disciple was so often to hear again—"Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

Still further light is given us in the account of St. John. He tells us of an earlier incident, of which he had doubtless heard in his long friendship with Peter. The story shows that the way had been prepared for Peter by his listening to John's preaching of repentance. The Baptist announced himself as the pioneer of the Messiah's coming which was to bring in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom was to be entered through the gate of repentance. It is quite probable that, like Andrew, Peter was one of John's disciples, and had submitted to be baptised. But he had not yet learned the meaning of the Baptist's message. Toward the fuller understanding of this, his first step was taken when his brother introduced him to Jesus as the Messiah of whom John, the last of

the prophets, had spoken. The way in which Jesus received him is specially to be noted. We read that Jesus "looked upon" Peter.* It is the same word that is used of the look of love that so nearly won the young ruler, and again when Luke describes the look which broke Peter's heart in the High Priest's Hall. It was characteristic of Jesus that He used His eyes as the windows of His soul. With His glance He pierced into Peter's very being and grappled with his will, feeling after it, as it were, with a compelling love. Then, perceiving the man's response, Jesus changed his name—"Thou art Simon, son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas." The change denoted the assertion of Lordship, personal and complete. So Jesus begins with Peter where the Baptist left off.

Putting the two accounts together, we see that our Lord dropped a fermenting agent, so to speak, into the mind of His hearer, and left it to work. In changing Simon's name, He showed him what he might become † if he would allow the "grace and truth" that

* ἐμβλέψας: John i. 42; Mark x. 21; Luke xxii. 61.

† Cf, the Lord's question to the man possessed by many devils—"What is thy name?" It was the first step towards recovering of the man's true personality (Mark v. 9). For the idea of lordship involved in the change of name see 2 Sam. xii. 28.

was in Jesus to have its way. That first interview Peter would never forget. How vividly would he recall it when, three years later, Jesus called him once more by his first name, and bade him reckon up what Divine Love had done for him, and how he had requited it —"Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" (John xxi. 15). St. Luke's narrative takes up the story at a point some little time after the interview by the Jordan, and tells how there flashed on Peter the wonder of the Person who sat with him in his boat. Perhaps the Baptist's preaching had not produced more than a slight impression. But under the light of the character of Jesus, the life with which he had formerly been content showed up, as the spring sunshine reveals the dirt which winter darkness conceals. The Sun of Righteousness rose upon him, and he cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The ferment was doing its work, and he was ready to hear and obey the call, "Follow thou me."

No one can fail to see that this was one of the critical hours of Peter's life, and it is worth while to examine the situation a little more in detail.

We note, first, that our Lord gave Peter time to think. He knew the impetuous nature

of the man, and it would have been quite in character if he had suddenly, on the Jordan bank, resolved to abandon all and follow this new Teacher, especially as He was so highly commended by John the Baptist. But seed which springs up in a night has no deep root, so Peter was sent back to every day conditions and given a chance to think things over. For such thinking he had received certain new data. John's preaching had doubtless given him a new, or at least a clearer, idea of the nearness of the Kingdom of God. It had also kindled in his mind thoughts of the Messiah. We must remember that John had continually to deny that he was the Messiah, and Peter must perforce look elsewhere for His coming. It is more than likely that his thoughts turned to Jesus. Could this be the Christ ?

People say that it was the miraculous draught of fishes that finally decided Peter's allegiance, but that is surely wrong. St. Luke tells us that " while the multitude pressed upon Him, and heard the word of God, Jesus saw two boats standing by the lake, and He entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat." That was a prolonged sermon, and Peter heard it all, and heard it

as the *word of God*. Here, then, was One who spoke about God as even the Baptist could not. One can imagine the fisherman standing in the thwarts gazing in tense silence at the Speaker, with all kinds of new things stirring to life in his heart. Already he is bound hand and foot by the spell, for when Jesus enters his own province and teaches Peter something about his own trade, he cannot resist. The result, the draught of fishes, merely emphasised the impression which the teaching had already made. "I am a sinful man, O Lord"—the cry shows that Peter had suddenly been made alive to God by the words and deeds of Jesus. He had become aware of God as he never had been before. It was the hunger for further knowledge, thus deliberately created by our Lord, that turned the fisherman into the disciple. He left all and followed his Master, because he had had a first compelling glance into undreamed of reserves of love for himself, knowledge of God, and power over nature, which, all put together, showed him his own unworthiness of such love, and his ignorance and feebleness in the presence of such knowledge and such power. Conscious of a new sense of sin, eager for a greater knowledge, possibly misunderstanding the uses to which Christ's

power could be put, can we wonder that at the call he left all and followed? His obedience was the first step in the education of the apostle, the first stage in his acceptance of Jesus as the Christ of God.

(2) "Follow me!" The command came to Peter and his comrades once more in the middle of our Lord's Ministry. It was a time of great perplexity for them, and all the Gospels indicate that just here occurred a crisis as important as that which was involved in their call. The passages concerned are Matt. xvi. 13-28, Mark viii. 27-ix. 1; Luke ix. 18-27; John vi. 67-69. Each of these sections is placed in proximity to the story of the feeding of the five thousand, which in the Synoptists follows the mission of the Twelve, the death of John the Baptist, the spread of the fame of Jesus even as far as the ears of Herod, and the consequent hardening of the opposition of the Pharisaic party. No wonder the disciples were perplexed. We have seen that Jesus had impressed Peter with the idea of His power. That impression had been deepened by a series of miracles of healing. Why did He not use His unmeasured reserves to seize the opportunity presented by the desire of the multitudes to make Him King? It was a

crisis in the work of Jesus Himself. Once again He was being shown a "short cut" to the goal He had come to reach. Once again He had to make the great renunciation, and this time He must take His disciples with Him, or He and they must part.

It is necessary here to pause and say something which may not be generally accepted. It is the modern fashion to speak of the development of the mind and purpose of Jesus during His Ministry. Development no student of the Gospels can deny.* But was it going on just now? Was it now for the first time that Jesus accepted the idea of the Cross? We are told that at the outset of His work the spirit of our Lord was buoyant and optimistic, because He thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear; but that later on there gradually settled down on Him a dark shadow—the consciousness that only by suffering, only by the way of the Cross, would He come to His throne. In other words, the tendency is to regard the Gospels as a story of the education of Jesus.

To say that a few months before Calvary, Jesus awoke to the fact that He would have to tread the way of suffering, is to put small value

* Luke ii. 40 ("becoming full of wisdom," R.V. margin) and v. 52.

on His long training and experience at Nazareth. Our first glimpse of His life during that period is highly significant. "How is that ye sought me?" He asks His Mother, "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Already at twelve years of age His mind contains the germ-thought, afterwards fully expressed,* that for Him to do the Will of God must mean that the nearest human ties must be put second. The following eighteen years were years of quiet, of study and of prayer. He learned the practice of the presence of God. He pondered deeply, under the guidance of the Spirit of His Father, on the history of His people; He knew the meaning of the Servant-Section of Isaiah, and He understood the reasons for the tears of Jeremiah. As He studied these examples of the principles by which God deals with a sinful world, how could He miss the lesson they teach that he who would be God's herald must carry his Cross? It is not asserted that at the Baptism Jesus foresaw Calvary. But it is necessary to assert that it was no surprise to Him when He perceived that it was inevitable. To posit a mistake on His part in the early months of His Ministry, is to risk everything we hold essential in Him,

* Matt. x. 37.

and, further, it is distorting the picture we have in the records of the Evangelists.* Dr. A. B. Davidson, in a note on the phrase, "He learned obedience," says :—"Though He was a Son, He learned obedience. It is not remarkable that a son should be obedient, and it is not meant that the disposition of obedience was ever wanting to Him. But the disposition had to maintain itself in the face of greater and greater demands upon it. And as He had to meet these demands rising with the rising tide of things which He suffered, He entered ever more deeply into the experience of what obedience was. . . . When the writer says 'learned' obedience, he has no doubt in his mind the contrast between the Son's former state, and His state in 'the days of His flesh,' the latter of which, especially on its side of suffering, was to Him a thing wholly new."

Turn back to the passages under discussion. All the Synoptists agree that after the excitement caused by the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus sought solitude. In

* As early as the call of Levi, Jesus uses words which show that He made no such mistake. "The days will come: and when the bridegroom shall be taken away (ἀπαρθῇ, a word of violence, see M.V.) from them, then will they fast in those days" (Luke v. 35, Matt. ix. 15, Mark ii. 20; and cf. John x. 17, 18).

the parts around Cæsarea Philippi, He had a fuller revelation to make to His disciples. His question, "Who say ye that I am?" brought from Peter his great confession, a confession which earned a confirmation of the change of his name, and a bestowal of greater responsibility.

It is remarkable how Jesus, in His treatment of Peter, both in the first interview and on this occasion, kept ahead of the disciple's actual attainment. He valued Peter, not for what he was, but for what he might become. Certainly not for what he was, for immediately we read:—"And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again." To Peter this appeared flatly contradictory both to the meaning of his own confession, and to his Master's approval of that confession. We have seen* that Jesus had given His followers a glimpse of three great endowments—Love, Knowledge and Power, but the thought uppermost in Peter's mind was that of Power. How could this be reconciled with the gloom of the picture Jesus had just drawn? Peter, therefore, laying hands on Him, rebuked Him.

* p. 50.

What was there in common between a Cross and a Crown ?

So now Jesus must go back and teach once more that one cannot pick and choose which of the great endowments of the Kingdom of God one will claim. How far away from the road Peter is straying !

The rebuke administered by Jesus is a warning not to trespass on things which God has reserved. If one is to be a follower of Jesus, it can only be on the road that Jesus treads, and that is the road of the Will of His Father. Was it not the witness of all the history of His people that sin, whether of oneself or of one's nation, could only be met, conquered and cancelled by sacrifice and suffering ? " Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Hence anyone who would be Christ's disciple must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Him. The three subsequent verses amplify each of these propositions in turn.* " Deny himself "—yes, even to losing his life "*for My sake.*" " Take up his cross " —yes, turning his back deliberately on the chance to gain the whole world. " Follow Me "—yes, for one day the Son of Man shall

* Matt. xvi. 25, 26, 27. Note the recurrence of the explanatory " For " (γὰρ) at the beginning of each verse.

come again in glory to render to each man according to his deeds.

The Gospels dwell far more on the education of the disciples than on the education of their Master. The principles here enunciated were fixed and unalterable in the mind of Jesus from the commencement of His Ministry. He had settled them even before that. And His task now was to "begin to teach" His chosen men the second part of their lesson. They had felt His attraction, they had left their daily occupations and the hope of worldly gain for His sake. They had fairly begun to learn how to obey. They had yet to learn how to conquer the covetousness of the soul; how to avoid materialising the spiritual; how to take up each his own cross, and to follow the great Cross-bearer.

"Be thou faithful unto death." This was the challenge Jesus was issuing to His disciples. "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, but peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Paul laid his finger on the secret of devotion. Great causes are legion, but they are dead till great men lead others to win their triumph. Peter and his co-disciples had here a glimpse of the unique greatness of Him whose followers they were.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was but such a view as one may have from a mountain-top—there for a moment, the next blotted out by rolling mists. But, in spite of the mists of perplexity, misunderstanding and self-interest which rolled up and around Peter's eyes, for one critical and decisive moment he had seen Jesus as He was, the Servant-Son of the Living God. The vision gave him strength to go on the last stage of his journey to apostleship, obeying the voice which cried again, "Take up thy Cross. Follow thou Me!"

(3) We pass to the very end of the Gospel records, and we find that the last recorded word of Jesus to Peter was that with which He first greeted him—"Follow thou Me." For the record of the conversation, its meaning and its antecedents, we are indebted to St. John. In the story of the Passion, Peter figures prominently. Beginning with chapter xiii. his attitude is sketched for us with great detail. He is torn between protest and acquiescence. The Jewish prejudice and the human pride that underlay his rebuke of his Master at Cæsarea Philippi are qualities that die hard in him. At the foot washing he will hardly let his Master do for him the servile

office which he himself would not have performed for anyone.* But the lesson he has already learned—the lesson of loyalty—saves him. He cannot bear to have "no part" with Christ. Luke tells us of the Lord's turning and looking on Peter, when he denied knowledge of Him. The look showed him his danger. Is it any wonder that while Judas went into the night to sell his soul, Peter, held fast through the darkness by the strong hands of Love, crept out into the dawning light to weep his sins away?

All this means that Peter's education was proceeding by action as well as by precept. There is the unerring touch of the skilled surgeon in Jesus' treatment of him. So little would have spoiled the whole operation, so much forbearance, tact and love were needed to make the patient whole. It is a happy thing for us that we have the appendix to the Fourth Gospel (Chapter xxi.), for we see here the triumphant end of our Lord's work with Peter. He treats him as if He were taking

* The impression made on Peter's mind by the events of the last week of our Lord's life comes out strongly in the First Epistle. cf. 1 Peter v. 5 with John xiii. 4 (on being "girded" with humility); v. 3 ("ensamples") with John xiii. 15; v. 2 (Tend, ποιμάνατε, the flock) with John xxi. 16 (the same Greek word); v. 4 (the Chief Shepherd) with John xxi. 15, 16, 17 (*My* lambs, *My* sheep); v. iii. ("lording it," κατακυριεύοντες) with Luke xxii. 25 (κυριεύουσιν); v. 8 (the adversary) with Luke xxii. 31.

the stitches out of his wounded soul. How full of understanding is His greeting of the penitent. "*Simon, son of John.*" The use of the name would take Peter back to the first meeting, before he had learned anything of his Lord, before he had made mistakes over his lesson. It would take him back to that early love, which, like a torrent, had swept him into the train of Jesus. It would take him back to the crisis at Cæsarea, when for a moment he had seen his Lord as He was, Son of Man, Son of God. But it would also take him back to the upper room—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath asked to have thee . . . but I have prayed for thee." How ill he had requited that interceding Love! How unworthy he was to be called the Rock-man! Yet, in spite of all, there comes the challenging, pleading question, "Lovest thou me?" The scene might have been in George Herbert's mind, when he wrote his little poem, "Discipline":

Throw away Thy rod,
Throw away Thy wrath;
  O my God,
Take the gentle path.

For my heart's desire
Unto Thee is bent,
  I aspire
To a full consent.

Though I fail I weep :
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

The way in which the disciple is brought to confession of his frailty is very delicately and subtly drawn, culminating in the restoration of his commission—Feed my lambs, and the last word of Jesus to Peter is a word of command and of hope. Because of what his Lord told him of the things he should suffer for His sake, he was, perhaps, half afraid he should have to go through the ordeal alone. "What about John?" he asks. "If I will," answers Jesus, "that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

Chapter IV

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS :

(i) Its Demands

"Oh, that I were free of that idol, which they call Myself; and that Christ were for Myself, and Myself a decourted [discarded] cypher, and a denied and forsworn thing! O Myself, if thou couldst give Christ the way, and take thine own room, which is to sit as low as nothing!—Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661), Letter No. 197.

Dr. Hort, commenting upon the passage in which our Lord gave His Mother into the charge of the disciple whom He loved, says, "What Mary is among kinsfolk, that and even more than that, is St. John among friends. Others beside him were loved and trusted by Jesus, loved not merely as He loved all men, but as friends and companions of His daily doings. John, however, was the friend of His own special choice, and one with whom we feel that in the strictest sense He lived in communion on both sides of giving and receiving."* The quotation illustrates one of the characteristics of the Fourth Gospel.

* "Cambridge Sermons," p. 55.

The Synoptists are the Gospels of Friendliness ; John's is the Gospel of Friendship.

Friendliness implies the possession of the open, sunny, frank disposition which refuses to be fenced off from its fellow men by pride, contempt or self-esteem. Such indeed was the nature of Jesus. Once, and once only, do we read of an apparent repulse given to one who would approach Him.* A closer reading of the incident—the story of the Syro-Phœnician mother—shows that Jesus took up the attitude which seems so strange for two reasons : first, for the education and strengthening of the woman's faith ; and second, to demonstrate to His disciples that God would open a door of hope, even to Gentiles. The incident stands alone, and for the rest we have the unbroken record of a friendliness that is ever approachable, and that welcomes all sincere seekers for its help. "*Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto*," said the Latin Terence, and Jesus showed the same large-hearted hospitality. "Friend of sinners" was the immortal name bestowed on Him by His foes, but they forgot that He was, on their own showing, the friend of Simon the Pharisee.†

* Mark vii. 27.

† cf. Luke vii. 34 with verse 36.

He did not recognise the bars of caste or class, and one of the reasons why He chose for Himself the title "Son of Man" was that He was the Lover of Man wherever and however he was to be found.

But friendliness and friendship are two different things. Friendliness does not depend on reciprocated affection, but without it friendship is impossible. It is a truism that one can be friendly to most men, but one can only be a friend to few. Hence we find, in all four portraits of Jesus, that He had an inner circle with whom He was intimate. These, in the sense in which we now speak, were His friends.

In the Fourth Gospel the term "friends"* is applied in particular to three individuals or groups, that is to say to John the Baptist, to the household at Bethany, and to the Apostles. We can only deal briefly with the first two of these, reserving fuller treatment for the third.

(1) John the Baptist.

John the Baptist calls himself the friend of Jesus. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom,

* With the possible exception of Luke xii. 4, when the term may be simply a mode of address, the word occurs only in St. John—that is, of course, in the sense under discussion.

which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 29, 30). We are not told that Jesus and the Baptist had met before the Baptism of the Lord in Jordan, but we may assume that their kinship had prevented their being entire strangers to one another. In any case, John's claim was not repudiated by Jesus, who called him "much more than a prophet," so giving to him the highest possible honour. Moreover, there is in the words of Jesus about John a tone of admiration which is not to be found in His spoken estimate of any other man. "What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts" (Luke vii. 18-35)* There were all the elements of understanding and sympathy between John and Jesus, and we may therefore assume that the former was not using a mere figure of speech when he called himself the Bridegroom's friend. What was the basis of the friendship? It was not in the sharing of common tastes, or common points of view.

* Not in kings' prisons, as John was when Jesus spoke.

Their attitude to life differed, as did their methods of approach to its problems and tasks.* But they did share in a common cause. The Baptist was the herald of the Kingdom of which Jesus was the Founder and King. They were bound together by the chain of a purpose whose first links were forged in Eternity. The reality of God was the deepest factor in the life of both. A common loyalty to Him must have given birth to mutual love, from which every shade of jealousy was excluded. John's conscious service of God† was the qualification for partnership with Jesus. And that is a moral qualification.

(2) The Household at Bethany.

We turn to the family group which is singled out in the Fourth Gospel for special honour. Each member of the group is mentioned as standing in peculiarly intimate relations with our Lord. He calls Lazarus "our friend."‡ We read that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." The sisters are sometimes compared, to the disadvantage of Martha (Luke x. 41, 42), but if Mary showed the more evident affection, it

* See especially Luke vii. 33, 34.
† John i. 33, 34.
‡ John xi. 11.

must not be forgotten that it was Martha who first received Jesus into her house, and that it was to Martha that He spoke the words which are the charter of our immortality. Mary's costly gift—the perfume of which still fills the world—shows in what high honour the household held the Lord, and what strong love bound them to Him.* Of the character of Lazarus we know little. It may well be that the silence of the Synoptists about him, and especially about the miracle which raised him from the tomb, sprang from a desire to spare one who had been so intimate with Jesus from the revenge of Jewish fanatics on the one hand, or the curiosity of Pagan superstition on the other, a superstition, moreover, which might easily have exalted Lazarus as a demi-god, as it would have exalted Paul in Melita.

There is something very attractive about this Bethany home. Though each member of it is so different from the others, there is an atmosphere of unity and love about it, which is only set off, and not dispersed, by St. Luke's account of Martha's entertainment of Jesus. Any busy housewife knows how easy it is to be irritable when she is distracted† by

* Luke x. 38; John xi. 25, 26; John xii. 1-8.

† Luke x. 40—περιεσπᾶτο, "dragged about" by many cares.

conflicting duties, but such irritation is not normal; and when Lazarus lies dead, Martha, though she is still the practical one of the house,* shows her deeper nature in St. John's moving story of her meeting with the Lord. It was a home of love in which those friends of Jesus lived.

Hither, then, did Jesus and His disciples resort from time to time on their journeys, and here He probably made His headquarters during the last week of His earthly life.† It was natural that the Lord, in His uttermost need, should turn for shelter and for fellowship to the home of Martha and her sister and Lazarus whose hospitality He had so often enjoyed. One incident of the week stands out pre-eminently, both because of the beauty of the act, and because of the honour Jesus paid to the doer of it. It was Martha's sister, Mary, who anointed the Lord's feet with ointment exceeding precious, performing for Him an office which only a slave would perform for a master of very high degree: and stooping lower still, wiped her Saviour's feet with her hair, unconsciously crowning herself through her so

* John xi. 19, 20. Note how Martha at once leaves the company. Mary has to be summoned.

† Luke xxi. 37; Mark xi. 11, 12; Matt. xxi. 17.

deep humility. Rarely has spiritual insight been so keen as was Mary's in her gift. "Why this waste?" asks Judas—Judas who valued the ointment at 300 pence, and sold his Lord's life for 120! Jesus replied, "Let her alone, for she hath kept this against the day of my burial."* The love of the Bethany household was a love that would stand by Jesus in His sorest trials. This also is a qualification for His friendship.

(3) The Disciples.

The fullest disclosure of the meaning of friendship with Himself is made by Jesus to the Twelve in the last discourses in the Fourth Gospel. It is to this innermost circle that He specifically gives the name—"Ye are my friends."† He tells them that He chose them to be such. How deliberate was His choice we have already seen, but when it was once made, He went the whole length of friendship. "Ye are my beloved,"‡ He says. But lest any of them should be betrayed into mere sentiment, or into thinking that this high

* John xii. 1-8; cf. Matt. xxvi. 6-13. For an interesting discussion as to whether there were one or two anointings, see Girodon, "Commentaire sur S. Luc," pp. 249ff.

† John xv. 12-17.

‡ φίλοι μου.

honour might be put to base uses, He adds—"*Ye are my beloved, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*" If Christ's Friendship is a great joy, it is also a drastic discipline. This is true of all friendship worthy of the name. Love carries with it both enlargement and restriction. At first, intercourse with one's friend widens the vision and expands the heart, as room is made for him in the affections. Then comes the perception that if the intimacy is to go deeper, one's self-interest must be given up. Under the discipline of love one's own opinions and aims will be modified, and if the friendship is real enough, life itself must not be counted more dear than love.

Nowhere is friendship more critically analysed, or more beautifully described than in the words of Jesus at the Table of the Last Supper. "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I loved you. There is no greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I name you bondservants, for the bondservant does not know what his master is going to do; but I have called you friends, because whatever I heard from my Father I made known to you. It was not you who

chose Me, but I who chose you, and I have appointed you, that you, in your turn, should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give you. This I command you that you love one another."

We know that the Twelve, because they had to live together, often fell into bickering and jealousy (Mark x. 32-45). How were they to prove themselves worthy of Christ's friendship by learning to love each other? The answer lies in our Lord's way with them, whereby He restricted their selfishness and enlarged their self. The double process may be more simply put by saying that Christ demands certain things from, and bestows certain gifts on, those who seek to be friends of His.*

The first demand on men who would be intimate with Jesus is for obedience. "Ye are my friends if ye do what I command you." The condition sounds strange. It would not hold in friendship as between man and man. But the demand was always made by Jesus, and if it were not conceded, the seeker got no further. The young ruler, the "divers who would follow Him, but upon conditions,"†

* The gifts of the friendship of Jesus are discussed in the next chapter.

† Luke ix. 57, A.V. heading to the chapter.

Judas Iscariot, who already in John vi. 70, 71, is being sifted out of the circle, though he is still one of the Twelve*—all these are examples of men who failed of intimacy because they did not meet the initial demand for full obedience. Those who continued within the circle, and grew in friendship with the Master, confessed that they counted the world well lost for Him. "Lo, we have left all and followed Thee." "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (Luke xviii. 28, John vi. 68).

Jesus' demand for obedience as a condition of friendship was not arbitrary. He could do no other, being what He was. His moral supremacy enraged His critics and amazed His followers. They felt that He Himself, and the words He spoke, were the embodiment and expression of what was perfectly right. The Gospels artlessly preserve for us the atmosphere of astonishment that prevailed in the circles through which He moved. The answer to those who asked about Cæsar's tribute silenced His enemies, not because it was so clever but because it struck with one thrust to the heart of the right and wrong of the whole

* Les évangélistes ne nomment jamais Judas sans ajouter: "qui fut un traître" (Girodon.)

situation.* "I am the Truth," He said, and men's hearts told them that He spoke the truth in saying it. If, therefore, a man came seeking His friendship, but not prepared to follow the truth wherever it might lead him, he disqualified himself. How could anyone be a friend of Jesus, and act contrary to His principles? Judas is the answer. How could people remain friends of His if their hearts were filled with self-love? Let His words to Salome be the reply—a reply which is all the more significant because it was addressed to one who came "worshipping Him" (Matt. xx. 20-28). From first to last, the Gospels show us that refusal to be true to the best one knows is the greatest bar to Friendship with Jesus.

The obedience which Christ demanded was not to be the obedience of slaves.† In the passage under consideration, as indeed throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus regards the relation between His friends and Himself as in some degree a reflection of that which existed between Himself and His Father, where perfect love cast out fear, for fear brings

* Luke xx. 20-26.

† "If the claims of Jesus to personal obedience are felt to be amazing, not less amazing is the free and joyous acquiescence with which men responded to His call." (Macintosh, "Person of Christ," p. 31).

restriction.* Between the Son and the Father there is absolute harmony of purpose and will. So is it to be between the Master and His disciples. And this spells obedience on their part. On this condition, and on this alone, it is possible for Him to make known to them "all that their Lord doeth," and to reveal "all things which I heard from my Father." Obedience is the way to unfettered intercourse.

A shadow rested on the upper room as Jesus spoke. He had said that He was leaving them. Was the intercourse then all over and ended? It would have been if it had been they who attached themselves to Him. But, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you," and that for a definite purpose. Was the purpose defeated and the plan cancelled by His going? We do not need to deny that the doubt arose in their minds, but the way in which they lingered about after the Crucifixion, as if they half-consciously expected something to happen, shows that they had to some extent taken Christ's standpoint. We do these men injustice if we picture them as being in the same spiritual state as they were when Jesus first chose and called them. They must have

* 1 John iv. 18. κόλασις is the paralysis of the faculties caused by fear. See the interesting notes on this word and on κολάζω in M.V.

felt that His was a mission to the world and for the world's blessing. If they thought, in their dismay at His going, "What shall *we* do without Him?" would they not also wonder what will the world do without Him?*

In answer to this unspoken question, Jesus presents His second demand, a demand for co-operation. "I chose you (as my friends) and appointed you that you yourselves should go away and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." Mark the fulness of co-operation that Jesus asks. To the measure of their ability they were to do what their Master did. He was "going away" to bear fruit. Atonement, Eternal Life, the Gift of the Holy Spirit—what fruit was to follow His going away! (John xvi. 7). Now with marked emphasis He tells them that "you yourselves" are to "go away" into the world for which He died, and carry on His work. He called this fruit-bearing, and the fruit was to remain. The word takes us back to an earlier part of the conversation—"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, whatsoever ye will ye shall ask, and it shall be done for you. Herein is

* That the two strains of thought were running in their minds is evident from John xvi. 7-11: "If I go away the Comforter will come to *you* . . . and he will convict the *world*" etc. See the question of Judas (not Iscariot) xiv. 22.

my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and that ye be my disciples" (John xv. 8, R.V. margin).

Co-operation meant for Christ not only common service, but a common life—"Abide in me"—and a common inspiration—"Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He will give it you." It is more than we mean by co-operation. It is the sinking of self in the life of Christ, and the adoption of His aim; the sharing of His sacrificial suffering: a union with Him in life and sympathy as close as the union of the branch with the vine. That is only possible to those whom He calls His friends.

We have already hinted at the last demand laid on the friends of Jesus—a demand that they should love one another. In some ways this is a harder task than obedience paid directly to the Lord Himself. It is possible to be happy in the service of one greater than yourself—if you love him. It is not so easy to love and serve your equals. But the Master knew that His whole purpose would be nullified if, after His departure, His followers fell apart through any lack of understanding or sympathy among themselves. He knew also the reality of the danger. The Gospels are very frank in depicting it. If on any occasion He was withdrawn

from them, it usually happened that some jealousy emerged. Even on the last journey to Jerusalem, while He was going on before them, and the cloud of mysterious sorrow that was over Him seemed for a moment to separate Him from them, even then James and John could be plotting for precedence in His Kingdom. What hope was there that, after His final departure, they would agree on things that touched that Kingdom ? Events proved that, after Pentecost, the apostles remained for a long time in Jerusalem. Had the infant Church been disrupted there by faction, there would have been no possibility of its spreading to " Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth." Jesus, therefore, was thinking not only of the development of the character of His followers, but of the very existence of His Kingdom on earth, when He said, " This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I loved you." Love was the only possible way by which the dangers foreseen by Christ could be averted. Differences of endowment, of temper or of outlook, would all be spanned by love, and by love alone. Only so could His Kingdom come. " By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Chapter V

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS :

(ii) Its Gifts.

"Friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts."—Bacon.

To those who became His friends, Jesus gave Himself with a whole-hearted enthusiasm. He offered them not superficial gifts, but the richest treasures of His mind.* He told them that they must love each other "even as I loved you," setting His love as the standard to which their every-day conduct must conform.

Let us look at some examples of the way in which Jesus expressed His love.

It was a habit of His to talk familiarly with them (Luke xxiv. 32). We are apt to think that Jesus never spoke of anything but religion. But surely there must have been other topics of common life, about which He and the twelve would converse in their walks together. "Talk (among friends) has none of the freezing

* Cf. Luke xi. 41. πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεεμοσύνην ("Give as alms the things that are within you.") See M.V. on ἔνειμι.

immunities of the pulpit. It cannot, even if it would, become merely æsthetic or merely classical like literature. A jest intervenes, the solemn humbug is dissolved in laughter, and speech runs forth out of the contemporary groove into the open fields of nature, cheery and cheering, like schoolboys out of school."* Good humour is a great solvent of error and selfishness, and without it we may be sure the little company could not have held together. It was the sulky man who fell out.

Jesus was the personal centre round which all the thoughts of the group revolved. In every perplexity they relied absolutely on Him. Were they faced with the task of feeding a starving multitude? Jesus would be able to do it. Did they want to know how to pray? Jesus would teach them. He was like the alpine guide who goes ahead of his party, cutting steps in the difficult ice. The attitude of Thomas on one occasion is instructive. When the news of Lazarus' illness came, Jesus said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judæa again." The disciples say unto Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone Thee; and goest thou thither again?" Then Jesus saith unto them, "Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep.

* R. L. Stevenson, "Memories and Portraits."

. . . Let us go to him." Thomas, who is called Didymus, said unto his fellow-disciples, " Let us also go, that we may die with Him " (John xi. 7-16).

The incident shows how Jesus dominated His followers, but it was a domination of love. The Gospels make it quite clear that Jesus did not work miracles in order to enslave the minds of the disciples. Of course they were affected by His " mighty works," but He said expressly that He so worked " to the intent that ye may believe " (John xi. 15). Believe what ? In His power ? Yes, certainly ; but in something deeper also. The Gospels constantly note the compassion which moved His power to action (Matt. xiv. 14). His pity was the child of the love for all men that filled His heart. He desired His disciples to believe in Him as the embodiment of pitying, healing, saving love.

He taught His friends to rely also on His perfect understanding. They were conscious that He knew them through and through, both at their best and at their worst. There were times when they felt themselves growing under the stimulus of His confidence in them. They asked Him to increase their faith (Luke xvii. 5), a faith by which already they had achieved surprising things (Mark vi.

30 cf. Luke x. 17). If, on the other hand, He had occasion to rebuke them, He did it with such tact that they felt the healing more than the severity of the rebuke. When out of His hearing they sometimes quarrelled, but they found that He knew all about it (Mark ix. 33-34). He did not scold them, but " sat down and called the twelve, and he saith to them, If any man would be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a little child, and set him in the midst of them : and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, whosoever shall receive this little child in my name, receiveth me . . . for he that is least among you all, the same is great."*

They learned, too, the strength of His protection. Nine of them were left behind when He went up into the Mount of Transfiguration. When He descended He found them helpless before the scribes who were jeering at their failure to heal an epileptic boy. " What question ye with them ? " He asks indignantly, and straightway cured the sufferer and put their enemies to shame (Mark ix. 14-27). In the Garden of Gethsemane, He hears the tramp of the company which the traitor had brought to arrest Him. Quickly

* Mark ix. 35-37, and Luke ix. 46-48.

He arouses His sleeping disciples, but it is too late. So He stands between them and His enemies. "Whom seek ye?" He asks. "Jesus of Nazareth," say they. "I told you that I am he," Jesus replies; "if therefore ye seek me, let these (pointing to the men behind Him) go their way." The Evangelist adds, "that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, of those whom thou hast given me, I lost not one."*

It may be that it was not till a long time had passed that the disciples learned the quality of Jesus' love for them. The records show that they learned it partly by contrast. "Greater love," said He, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends." The inference is plain. Now hear Peter. "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended." Jesus said unto him, "In truth I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."† If tradition speaks truly, Peter did die for his Lord. But that was when he had laid aside his boasting, and had learned his lesson. The contrast had gone home; and when that happened, he had

* John xviii. 1-11. Luke (xxii. 51) adds that Jesus healed Malchus' wound, probably to shield Peter.

† John xv. 13; xiii. 37-38; Matt. xxvi. 31-35 (and compare verse 31 with John x. 11).

arrived at the final stage, when " it was granted to him not only to profess belief on Christ, but also to suffer on his behalf."*

These are illustrations of the way in which Jesus gave Himself to His disciples. The gift raised a mighty wonder in their hearts, a wonder which explains the kind of excitement and exhilaration which pervades the New Testament. We see how their sense of the wisdom of their Master's words deepened as they heard Him, how they were amazed at His power, yet at first they had thought of Him merely as a wonderful teacher and a still more wonderful friend. But their speeches (in Acts) and their writings (in the Epistles), which mention very few details of His earthly life, show that, after His departure, they were possessed by the thought of Jesus as the perfect manifestation of the love of God.† This is what He intended them to discover and the way in which He led them up to it is apparent in the conversation at the supper table on the night of His betrayal.

After Judas had left the company, Jesus begins to explain to them that though He must suffer death, He will not leave them orphans. They too will suffer for His name, but they

* Phil. i. 29.

† 2 Cor. v. 16, 18, 19.

must remember that God prunes the branch that is to be fruitful. Their sorrow will ultimately be turned into rejoicing, because not only will He Himself send them another Comforter, but in a little while they shall see Him again with a joy that no one can take from them. In the meantime, He is going away, but they know the way to where He is going. At this point Thomas breaks in with a question —"Lord, we do not know whither thou goest. How can we know the way?" Jesus answers—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one cometh to the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known the Father also; from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Then Philip interrupts. "Lord, let us see the Father. That is all we want." Jesus seizes the opening. "Philip, have I been with you all this time and yet you do not understand me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. The words I speak, the deeds I do, are my Father's words and deeds. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?"*

* This paragraph follows the order of Moffatt, who places chapters xv. and xvi. in the middle of xiii. 31, so that the conversation begins "When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, 'I am the true Vine,'" etc., and ends, "Rise, let us be going."

Philip's exclamation, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough," is the exact point to which Jesus had been leading. His love for them had the effect of satisfying present need, and creating at the same time a desire for something further. His humanity was so great that it suggested something beyond. One can never be satisfied by a suggestion: it must lead somewhere; and in the case of the friends of Jesus, His love led them up to God's love. They became sure of God because they were sure of Jesus. After the Resurrection they thought of God in terms of Jesus. And, what is more, they found God incarnate in Jesus in a way in which He never was incarnate in any other. The love of Jesus, they saw, had come from above. It was as if men, lost in the dark of a deep-sunk mine, should come across a pure stream of water which had plunged underground from the sunlit upper air. It would bring them new life as they drank; but it would also give them hope that, if they followed it, it would lead them out to light. "Set your mind on the things that are above, for . . . your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory" (Col. iii. 2-4). "The

knowledge of God's glory is in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6).

Let us retrace our steps to look at another aspect of the love of Jesus for His friends. He said, "I lay down my life," and "Greater love hath no man than this." He did not merely mean that He was going to die for men. It may be a "greater love" to live for a man than to die for him. In the heat of battle, seized by some heroic desire to save a comrade, a man might rush on death, whose ordinary life was selfish and thoughtless. But to lay down one's *life*, the whole of it, and to crown the daily sacrifice by death, for the sake of others—that is love indeed! And that is what Jesus did.

Does this throw light on the Atonement? Jesus said that He came, not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28). Elsewhere He said that He did this in obedience to His Father's will (John x. 18), Who desired that not even one of the least should perish (Matt. xviii. 12-14). Jesus identified His own love with that of His Father. His great prayer in chapter xvii. of St. John's Gospel looks forward to the Atonement as complete, when men shall be at one with God, and at one with each

other. "I pray that they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us," words which are a Johannine parallel to the saying reported in Luke x. 22, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is save the Father: and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." Jesus is not a mere link between God and Man. He is both in ideal unity. As such the life that He gave for men takes death on its way and goes beyond it. No doctrine of the Atonement can be adequate that does not see in Jesus the incarnation of the love of God, "eternal, changeless, infinite," and equally the incarnation of the perfected love of man flowing back to its Divine source. It is in Jesus, living, dying, risen and ascended, that men come to see God, and the vision satisfies. "No one can fail to come to God by me." However men of later times may interpret Him, the indelible impression made on those who lived nearest to Jesus is summed up in the liturgical fragment in 1 Tim. iii. 16:—

"Who does not admit how profound is the divine truth of our religion?—It is he who was

Manifested in the flesh,
Vindicated by the Spirit,
Seen by the Angels,
Preached among the nations,
Believed on throughout the world,
Taken up to glory."*

There was one other gift, not fully received till He had ascended, by which He completed the process, the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is a necessary fruit of His friendship. The gift is referred to in the Synoptists, " You will be dragged before kings and governors," He told His disciples, " for the sake of my Name. That will be an opportunity for you to bear witness. So resolve to yourselves that you will not rehearse your defence beforehand, for I will give you words and wisdom that not one of your opponents will be able to meet or refute." (Luke xxi. 12-15). The promise is repeated and explained in the Fourth Gospel. " If they persecuted me they will also persecute you. But when the Comforter is come, he, and you also, shall bear witness of me. He will convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness and of judgment " (John xv. 20, 26; xvi. 7-11). After Pentecost, the

* Moffatt's translation. The use of the technical word ὁμολογουμένως (R.V. " confessedly ") makes it probable that this is a very early fragment of a Creed. For εὐσεβέια (object of pious worship) see M.V., where examples of its non-classical use and Hellenistic colour are given.

disciples appear like different men. Or rather, they were the same, but their powers were raised to the highest degree. Each preserved his own identity, but each was a new creation in Christ Jesus. In each the false self died, and the true self rose with Christ, clean and reinforced. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The Holy Spirit perpetuated the dominance of Jesus over their love and life. In their speeches they talked of Him as "The Spirit of Jesus," and the spirit of prophecy is said to be the witness about Jesus.* The gift kept alive, and strengthened in them, the consciousness of their Lord.

The effect of this gift went further. The Holy Spirit led them into greater understanding of the truth. While He was with them, Jesus told them that there were many things He could say to them, which they were not yet able to bear. It was only after He was "glorified" that they could comprehend Him. He was the Truth, full, ultimate and Divine: and it was expedient for them that He should go away, for His bodily limitations hid from them the full meaning of His Person. In going away, He would not withdraw from them, nor leave them orphans, for the leading

* Rev. xix. 10.

of the Holy Spirit would result in setting Him forth in His true light, God in human flesh, Saviour, Redeemer, Teacher and Friend.

The final effect of the Spirit's bestowal appears in the result of this full understanding of Jesus, as seen both in the life and in the preaching of the Apostles. He willed most of all that they should find God in Him, and find themselves in God. Their fellowship was to be with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. That fellowship was to spread as others believed their word, and, in their turn, passed from darkness to light. The whole New Testament is the record of the great transition; and the experience of the Church confirms its witness that through Fellowship with Jesus men are enabled to become sons of the Living God. The attainment of the "glorious liberty" of sonship to God, which is the climax of all New Testament teaching, is the fairest fruit of the love of Jesus, who took on Himself our human nature, that He might thereby become the "first-born among a universal brotherhood" (Rom. viii. 21; John xx. 17; Rom. viii. 29).

Chapter VI

JESUS, THE TEACHER

"Religious truth is self-evidencing, evolved from the mind rather than deposited on it; and the care of the teacher must be directed less to any intellectual elaboration of proof, than to prepare the temper of the receiving soul, and to waken into consciousness the elementary experiences of reverence and faith."—Martineau.

The crowds who first heard Jesus are said to have "hung upon him, listening."* Wherever He went He was followed by the common people. Three times in thirty verses St. Mark mentions the throngs, and the instances are noteworthy. Each has its own touch of realism, and the effect of the whole passage is that of unceasing, excited, interested movement.

> "Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed: and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan and about Tyre and Sidon, a great

* Luke xix. 48. R.V.

multitude: and he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait upon him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: for he had healed many, insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him" (Mark iii. 7ff.).

"And he cometh into a house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread" (iii. 19f.).

"And again he began to teach by the sea side. And there is gathered to him a very great multitude, so that he entered into a boat, and sat in the sea, and all the multitude were by the sea on the land" (iv. 1f.).

The impression conveyed here is borne out by all the Gospels. Throughout His ministry, if we ever find Jesus "alone with his disciples" it is because He deliberately sought solitude. "He withdrew himself," He "crossed over to the other side," He "went up into a mountain to pray." Apart from times like these, He was always the centre of a crowd. Not that Jesus ever sought for notoriety. The spirit which asked for "signs" was abhorrent to Him. Nevertheless, the eagerness of the

multitude demands explanation, and if we are to understand His secret, we must find that explanation.

The first thing that impresses us is the amazement with which His hearers regarded Him. There is a breathlessness about their astonishment. "What is this? A new teaching!" is a note so constant, that in reading our English New Testament we are apt to overlook it—one more instance of the ease with which familiarity dulls perception. But a close study of the original shows us that the effect of which we speak was much more complex than our English records are able to represent. The Gospel writers realised this complexity, and it seems almost to render them at a loss for any one word that will adequately express the wonder with which men heard the Master. They use not one word, but at least five.* In language borrowed from the boxer's ring they tell us that His audiences were "struck" by His words, as though they had received a knock-out blow. At another time we see them "transported with amazement." Yet again we watch them trying to ambush the speaker, and, with a "surprise" that is half admiring, half incredulous, finding

* See Appendix to this chapter.

themselves caught in their own trap. Frequently a new light burst from His sayings, and men were "dazzled" and "stupefied" by the unexpected brilliance. These effects were often produced by His words alone, apart from miracles. We are not surprised to find that some of these last created a feeling akin to physical "fear."

This cumulative evidence convinces us that wherever Jesus went, He made a stir. To use a figure of His own, His teaching was like new wine. There was ferment in it. When it came to a mind that by tradition had been made hard and stiff—like an old wineskin—the ferment proved too lively. The wineskin burst and the wine was wasted. The teaching was rejected because the mind could not hold it. When, on the other hand, the hearer was pliable and open to new truth—a new wineskin—the mind would "give" to, and be shaped by, the ferment of His teaching, and "both would be preserved" (Mark ii. 22.).

Or to use another of His figures, His word was like seed with life in it. Where it fell on to ground that was trodden hard by prejudice of any kind, or among the thorns of worldly care and selfishness, or on to soil that just covered the rock of a shallow nature, it was wasted, or

killed in its early growth. It needed depth and purity to enable it to bear fruit. But so truly was it living seed that wherever it fell it created a stir—even if it were only among the birds of the air that hastened to take it away (Mark iv. 1-9.).

But we note next, that not only did Jesus teach truths that lived, but that He Himself was very much alive. St Mark makes over thirty references to His actions and gestures as He spoke. Out of those thirty references, ten instances tell us of the use He made of His eyes. Sometimes He talks with His whole body, and we read that He "turned upon" those He was addressing. There is a considerable literature on this subject, and we need not go over ground already so familiar.* But no one, in hearing a great preacher, or in seeing a great actor, would choose a seat behind a pillar or a large hat. To watch the face of the speaker so often increases both interest and understanding : and part of the reason for the surging of the crowds around Jesus was that, while some wished to touch Him, many others desired a clear view of Him. It all gives us a picture of such an aliveness in the Preacher

* Glover, "Jesus of History," chap. iii.; article "Gestures" in Dictionary of Christ and Gospels.

as created a stir of life in the minds of those who listened.

Interest like this is not sustained by the use of high sounding phrases, unnatural fancies, or many-syllabled words. The truest eloquence is conveyed in the simplest language.* The English of the Authorised Version or of Bright's speeches illustrates this. The greatest principles are elemental, and they are best enunciated in elemental language. We must allow for the fact that we have no records of the speech of Jesus that are written in the language which He habitually used,† but the very fact that He did speak the tongue of the common people makes it certain that He spoke simply, using neither words nor tones that were merely professional.

In most religions there is a doctrine and practice of "reserve." Certain aspects of truth are invested with a character so sacred that they are kept for the initiated few, and the "people that know not," if they are not pronounced "accursed," are at least left outside. Rabbis, Gnostics, and the school of

* On our Lord's eloquence, see Wendt, "Teaching of Jesus," i. 148f.

† It must, however, be remembered that Jesus most probably spoke Greek, and such a phrase as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (the Son of Man) may be a literal report of what He called Himself (see Hastings' D.B., iv, p. 583a).

Plato are illustrations of this "reserve." Jesus also had His doctrine of reserve, but it did not lie in the fact that any particular truth was unsuited to the mind of a hearer. It was rather that the mind of some hearers was unfit to receive the truth. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." It was not He who arbitrarily divided His audience into "initiated" and "uninitiated," it was the life that was in His words that made the listeners classify themselves, whether they would or no. They were compelled to judge themselves worthy or unworthy of eternal life (Hebrews iv. 11-13).

Aliveness is only to be predicated of one who has a right relation to realities. A man is only half-alive when he is dreaming, or when he is engaged upon the pursuit of a freakish object. Life at its very fullest can only be said to belong to one who is in harmony with the sum total of permanent reality—an ideal which is synonymous with God Himself, and with Him alone. Jesus claimed this harmony for Himself. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him. Come unto

me . . . and I will give you rest."* "If ye abide in my word . . . ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."† "No one cometh unto the Father but by me."‡ Man feels within himself—and the feeling is the true secret of his unceasing struggle—that if he could attain to Truth, to Reality, to God, he would indeed be free and at rest. The trouble is that, unaided, he cannot distinguish between reality and unreality, between truth and delusion. Yet if anyone will give him a view of what is true, there is that in him which will cry out in recognition of it. There is that in him also which may cry out, "It will cost too much," but the fact remains that the truth is recognisable.

"We needs must love the Highest, *when we see it.*" Life and reality, and a straight road by which to attain to these, was what Jesus claimed to reveal. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." As He taught, men caught glimpses of the ideals to which He pointed and recognised them as true. It would be surprising if the common people had not been glad to listen as He spoke.

* Matt. xi. 27-28.
† John viii. 31-32.
‡ John xiv. 6-7.

It was this contact with Realities in His teaching, confirmed by the "signs following," that compelled men to say of Jesus that "He taught as One having authority, and not as their scribes." The word "authority"* is carefully chosen. The new "Vocabulary of the New Testament" marks stages in the growth of its meaning as follows: (1) liberty of action, (2) right of control, (3) executive power, (4) rule, (5) weight of influence, (6) high office in the State. They add that it may be claimed that in the New Testament the word conveys the idea of "knowledge" mingled with "power." All these shades are in the word as used of our Lord. He seems to move freely in the realms of conduct, as if He were perfectly at home in the Kingdom of righteousness. He refused the weapons of the world, but the bare truth made Him Master of things, and it gave Him knowledge as well as power.

The world at the time of our Lord was very much what it is in our own day. Independent thinking, of which the Prophets were conspicuous examples, was dead. Truth is always discarding its chrysalis sheath and flying forward; and the religious teachers of His day,

* ἐξουσία : Matt. vii. 29, ix. 6, 8. xxi. 23; Mark i. 27; John x. 18; and with these compare Luke iv. 6.

unaware of the flight, were guarding the empty sheath. They repeated, with enlargements, the sayings of the Fathers, and regarded them as being as sacred as the Law itself. It was for this that Jesus arraigned them when He asked, "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" Tradition was the watchword of the scribes (Matt. xv. 3). It appeared in the method of their teaching. Taking a text out of the Law or other portion of the sacred writings, they proceeded to quote as many commentators as they could unearth. Their highest ambition was to be learned in what had been said "by the elders." The letter was all, the spirit nothing. Their fiercest accusation against Jesus was, "Thou bearest witness of thyself, thy witness is not true." He paid little heed to the comments of the Fathers, and, going back to the original Word, brought its meaning to bear on actual life. So, while the scribes spoke with authorities, Jesus spoke with authority.

To bring out the force of the popular verdict that Jesus taught with authority, and not as their scribes, let us try to picture a Scribe at work.*

* See Schürer, "History of the Jewish People, 2, i. § 25 and ii. § 28.

By birth he was a layman, for men of the priestly order had tasks and functions other than his. Of necessity, his piety was of the deepest. Every Jew believed, in theory, that what is now our Old Testament came by the direct inspiration of God. But the Scribe believed this in practice as well as in theory. The Rolls of the Book were so sacred, that the hands that touched them must be washed before they touched anything else. The Scribe believed that of all the Books, the Law (our Pentateuch) was the most sacred. In writing it, Moses simply acted as the amanuensis of God. Not a letter, not a jot or tittle, of it might be altered. The Prophets and Histories, while part of the Holy Scriptures, came second to the Law. One might sell a volume of these in order to purchase a book of the Law, but the process must not be reversed. Those who engaged in the study of the Law became "the real teachers of the people, over whose spiritual life they bore complete sway." They were held in the greatest reverence by the common folk, who called them "the learned" (γραμματεῖς, "scribes") "the learned in the Law" (νομικοί "lawyers," as in Luke x. 25), "teachers of the Law" (νομοδιδάσκαλοι, Luke v. 17). They were addressed as "My

Master " (Rabbi), and sometimes as " Father," " Teacher " (see especially Matt. xxiii. 9-10). Though the work of the Scribes was supposed to be gratuitous, yet as *teachers* they found compensations, and, by a strange irony they laid themselves open to charges of covetousness and pride (Mark xii. 40, 38).

Their functions were threefold : (1) They had to develop the theory of the Law itself. This they did by discussions among themselves as to its meaning and application. The Law said, " Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath Day. In it thou shalt do no manner of work." This was not enough for the Rabbis, and they proceeded to define accurately what work was forbidden. The result amounted to thirty-nine prohibitions which specified such things as reaping and threshing, making a knot, seven things necessary for preparing venison, including catching the deer, writing two letters (apparently one was allowable) and so forth. But each of the thirty-nine points required further definition, such as the kind of knots which were legal or illegal. It was, for example, permitted to a woman to tie a bow in her cap strings—possibly a concession to the inevitable ! " And many other such things " they did and said.

Such casuistry laid stress on the wrong point. The Scribes forgot that the emphasis in the commandment fell on the holiness of the Sabbath, because God was holy, so they stressed the methods of destroying its holiness by work. Marriage and filial affection suffered by the same wrong-headed casuistry. Enlarging on Deut. xxiv. 1—the words about divorce—one school of the Scribes declared that a man might put away his wife if she spoiled his food. None of the scorn of Jesus bit more deeply than His denunciation of Corban—"If a man shall say to his father or his mother—'This money might have been at your service, but it is Corban' (that is, dedicated to God) he is exempt, so you hold, from doing anything for his father or mother" (Mark vii. 11-12). The result of all this was that the person and the holiness of the Divine Lawgiver was hidden by human interpretations of the sanctity of His Law.*

(2) The second function of the Scribes was that of teaching the Law which they had thus developed. This was done by gathering around

* The moral duties of neighbourly love, and the laws of worship and ceremonial observance, were incessantly coming into conflict, because those laws referred to certain appointed acts and forms . . . which admitted of no postponement." Wendt, op. cit, i, 46, 47.

the teacher a group of scholars. The Rabbi put questions which the scholars answered, or set problems for them to discuss. We see the school at work in the Temple scene of our Lord's boyhood. The disciple had only two duties, to learn faithfully, a task which was performed by endless recitation, and to hand on the teaching intact. The highest praise of a pupil was to be "like a well lined with lime, which loses not one drop."

(3) Of the third function of the Scribe—that of pronouncing legal decisions and acting as judge—we need say nothing further than to point out the challenge issued by Jesus to the accusers of the woman taken in adultery (John viii. 7, cf. Matt. vii. 1.).

The Law, in the strict sense, was written. But it was inevitable that such jurists as the Scribes should enlarge upon it. Hence there grew up a great oral tradition. It developed in two ways—first into a Law of Custom.* By this the commandments were split, and split again, into the subtlest details, in order to make the letter of the written word apply to the smallest and most accidental circumstances. Side by side with the authority of the Biblical Law rose another authority, that of

* The "Halachah."

ancient or national custom, as confirmed by recognised teachers. It will be seen that this was a constantly growing body of casuistic doctrine, but the good Jew was bound to regard it as of practically equal weight with the Mosaic enactments. But even this was not all. It was the business of the Scribe to fill up gaps in the historical narratives, and he did so by inventing sacred legends.* We have a mild specimen of his work in parts of the canonical Book of Chronicles, which contain history, worked up with the object of "pointing out the just claims and high value of the institutions of public worship" as practised by the most illustrious kings. In the Haggadah proper, such gaps were found and filled up in the histories of the Creation and of the Patriarchs.

Is it any wonder that to our Western mind the study of all this rubbish-heap is the driest and dreariest pursuit? But the Jew who sought salvation by the Law must go through with it. He was exhorted to learn by heart thousands of petty details and casuistic exceptions. The method has left traces in the teaching of St. Paul,† though his escape from the burden which neither he nor his fathers

* The "Haggadah."

† Gal. iii. 16; iv. 22-25.

were able to bear, largely accounts for the flights of soul and of joyful faith which are his chief glory. The pressure of the burden of keeping such a mass of laws and bye-laws explains also the despairing groans we hear in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. One can well believe that the agony caused in the pagan world by its belief in demons, was reproduced in Judaism by its bondage to Law. In the latter case it was perhaps worse than in the former, for it was the agony of a sensitive conscience rubbed raw.

It is, however, very easy to do injustice to the piety of our Lord's day. Extremists keep their cause alive till they have got rid of their opponents, and only then do they kill their cause. The Pharisees and Scribes were extremists, but it was to their zeal that any true religion that existed owed its survival. The spiritual history of the Jewish nation is, in its early stages, the story of struggle against idolatry. In its later stages it had a more subtle foe in the secularising influence of Hellenistic culture and philosophy, which spread over the world in the wake of the armies of Alexander the Great. That influence would have dethroned Jehovah, and in the struggle to preserve the honour of His Name the Pharisaic party was born.

But the means they used defeated the end they had in view. To such a degree did they fence about the Living God within the hedge of His own Law, that in making it impossible to keep that Law (interpreted and enlarged as we have seen), they made the search for Him almost hopeless. Hypocrisy or despair were too often the alternatives which presented themselves as the result of Pharisaic teaching. The blind were leading the blind, and the ditch yawned before them both. The words of Amos were fulfilled—" Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it." To such a time of dearth and hopelessness came Jesus with the living word, and saying, " Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." His word was with power, a power compared with which the scribal teaching was as moonlight is to sunlight, or as darkness is to dawn.

NOTE ON THE ASTONISHMENT CAUSED BY JESUS.

In Moulton & Geden's "Concordance to the Greek Testament," there are fifty instances in which the five words referred to in the text are used. Of these, sixteen show that the amazement was caused by our Lord's teaching. On these occasions no miracle is recorded. In three cases word and work are combined. Most significantly, seven times the effect is produced by His Personality alone, aided by neither speech nor sign. The following are the details:

(a) *Passages recording the effect of His words alone:*

(1) ἐκπλήσσομαι.—Matt. vii. 28, xiii. 54, xix. 25, xxii. 23.
Mark i. 22, vi. 2, x. 26, xi. 18.
Luke iv. 32.

The word here used comes from the root πλαγ which appears in πληγή a blow; in πλάγιαζω, of a ship tacking to and fro under the buffetings of adverse winds; or in πλάγιος, of troops wavering under hostile attacks, etc. In the light of this etymology, translate Mark x. 26—after our Lord's teaching about

the difficulty of a rich man in entering the Kingdom of Heaven—"And His disciples were utterly staggered, saying, Then who can be saved?"

(2) ἐξίστημι.—Luke ii. 47.

The use of the word here is significant, elsewhere it is only used of the effect of His deeds. The occasion is our Lord's first appearance in public. There is a strange mixture of the human and Divine already visible. It was like a boy to linger behind his parents. It was like what we know of Him in after days that He should spend the time in the Temple. As He "sat at the feet" of the Rabbis, His wisdom and intelligence were such, that even the doctors were "transported" and carried out of themselves with wonder. Was His greatest follower-to-be doing a similar thing at Tarsus at the same time? Was Gamaliel present?

(3) Θαυμάζω.—Matt. xxii. 22.
Mark v. 20.
Luke iv. 22, ix. 43 (deeds and words), xx. 26.
John iv. 27 (the disciples surprised at His talking with a woman).

In M.V. a third or fourth century letter from a father to a son is quoted. "I have been much surprised (πάνυ Θαυμάζω) my son, at not receiving a letter from you." Θαυμάζω= to be surprised, with a dash of incredulity in it. This comes out strongly in Luke xx. 26, when the Scribes and chief priests show a surprise which "never could have believed" that Jesus would turn the tables on them so cleverly.

(4) Θαμβέομαι.—Mark i. 27 (deeds and words), x. 24.

The word occurs in Mark only, and bears the sense of "dazzle," "stupefy," "bewilder." In x. 32, it is the effect of our Lord's lonely and awe-inspiring Personality, as He set His face to go to Jerusalem. Modern Greek has Θαμπαίνω "to blind," as by a flash of lightning.

(5) Φοβέομαι ("be afraid") see under (b) and (c).

(b) *Passages recording the effect of His deeds.*

(The bracketed figures refer to the words as indicated above.)

(1) Mark vii. 37; Luke ix. 43.

(2) Matt. xii. 23; Mark ii. 12; v. 42, vi. 51; Luke viii. 56.

(3) Matt. viii. 27, ix. 33, xv. 31, xxi. 20; Luke viii. 25, xi. 14; John vii. 21.
(4) Mark i. 27.
(5) First of physical fear, deepening into awe and reverence. Matt. ix. 8; Mark iv. 41; v. 15; Luke viii. 25, 35.

(c) *Passages recording the effect of His Personality, apart from deeds and words:*

(3) Matt. xxvii. 14; Mark xv. 5.
(4) Mark x. 32.
(5) Mark ix. 32, x. 32, xi. 18; Luke ix. 45; John vi. 19, 20.

The instances last quoted, under (5), bear close relation to the effect of "the fear of God," which may either draw one to Him in worship, or drive into opposition and hatred.

Chapter VII

OUR LORD'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

(i) His World View.

The truth of Nature is part of the truth of God; to him who does not search it out, darkness; to him who does, infinity.—Ruskin, "Modern Painters."

Jesus was a man of the open air. He loved the highway, the hillside, the sea. He spoke of flowers, of birds, of changing skies and glowing sunsets. To this day, His words come to men like the fresh breezes that wake at dawn. Though He had studied all the best literature of His nation, His speech never carried the taint of the midnight oil. If He joined in worship with His fellows, it was in the village Synagogue more than in the central Temple, and we gather from the records that He placed small value on any sort of ceremonialism. To Him, life was an open road, on which, if his face be God-ward, a man may breathe freely, see clearly, and arrive safely. What, then, were His thoughts about God?

We have already spoken of the relation to the Father which Jesus shared with no other.* But the Gospels teach us that He was also, and as truly, man, and we have ample warrant for asking what they tell us about the human content of His conception of God. We understand that His mind was subject to the laws of growth and that He used sources, open to all men, for the nurture and training of His thought. And if we examine the nature of anyone's idea of God, we can best do so by asking three questions—first, what is his outlook on the world? second, what is his idea of personal duty and destiny? ; third, what are his habits of prayer? These are like streams that rise in the heights of the soul, and if we trace them back, we shall arrive at some clear perception of the nature of those heights ; in other words, given the answers to these questions, we shall know what is a man's personal idea of God. As reverently and carefully as we can, let us follow these streams in the mind of Jesus.

First, then, what light does our Lord's outlook on life and the world shed on His thought of God? In regard to the natural

* See p. 85, and cf. John v. 22-23 ; Mark ii. 6-11 ; Rom. ix. 3-5 (and Sanday's note on the last passage).

order of the universe, we need not assume that Jesus either knew or taught all that God has left to advancing science to discover for itself. On this subject we cannot do better than to mark some wise words of a great student of our Lord's thought. "That Jesus, in spite of the keen faculty of observation which He possessed, and the independence of His judgment, abstained from any attempt at criticising the popular ideas concerning the order of the world, whether in the way of correcting or of completing them, must be regarded as a course intentionally pursued by Him in prosecuting His mission of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. . . . In so far as He might have occupied Himself with more exactly determining the order of the world, or with rectifying the popular conceptions in regard to it, He would have turned aside the attention and intelligence of His hearers from the essential subject of His Messianic preaching."*

At the same time, it is to be remembered that, embedded in these "popular conceptions" is the distinctive contribution of Hebrew thought to the religion of the world. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This was the foundation of

* Wendt, "Teaching of Jesus," i, p. 153.

our Lord's thinking—"In the beginning, *God*." To His eyes, therefore, the world was God's world, and God's work, and in it He found everywhere the prints of "the finger of God," the very stamp of the Divine character ;* and by this we mean much more than that Nature simply reminded Him of God. He said, for example, that men must forgive their enemies, if they would be truly children of God, for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain alike on the just and the unjust.† This is not Nature resembling God ; it is God working on the same principles always, whether in the material or in the moral sphere.

This points to the fact that Jesus was very sure of God. God's governance of the world was so very right, that anyone who was engaged whole-heartedly in His service might rely on Him at every point. This is the reason why He told His disciples that if they would seek first the Kingdom and the Righteousness of God, all other things should be added to them.‡ In looking out on the world Jesus saw that God did not work in one way in Nature, and in

* Cf. Wordsworth, "Prelude," iii, 106ff.

† Matt. v. 44, 45.

‡ Matt. vi. 32, 33.

another way in the realm of the spirit. His own certainty about this was so clear, that He was continually warning His disciples against being "little-faithed" men*; and He told them that to such an extent could they rely on God, that if mountainous difficulties blocked the way of the Kingdom, they could be removed by the power that waits on faith.

For this view of God and of His government of the universe, Jesus has been condemned as a dreamer, an idealist out of touch with hard fact. "What about disease and accident, sorrow and death?" say His critics. "How can it be God's world in which these things so prevail, or what sort of God is He who allows these things?" Twice at least our Lord was faced with this difficulty, once when He was told of some Galileans who were murdered at their worship by Pilate (Luke xiii. 1-5), and again when His disciples asked about a blind man, whether it was his own or his parents' sin that brought the affliction on him (John ix. 2). That Jesus well knew that such happenings did raise questions in men's minds, is shown by the fact that He brushes aside the current explanation, which was, that if a man

* The occurrences of this word—"ὀλιγόπιστοι"—will repay study. They are Matt. vi. 30 (Luke xii. 28), viii 26, xiv. 31 ("Why were you in two minds?"), xvi. 8.

suffered, he deserved it. "Yes, sometimes,"* said Jesus, "but not always."† At best, it was not a theory that would cover all the facts.

Jesus did not, in so many words, solve this difficulty. But as we try to see the world through His eyes, we catch two or three points of light that help us. To begin with, He was always telling men not to be short-sighted. He believed in immortality. He spoke of raising up at the last day those who believed on Him.‡ In the thought of Jesus, this life is the seed plot for Eternity, and Eternity is the full fruitage of the life that is here and now. "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 11, 12). "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and *after that* have no more that they can do" (Luke xii. 4).

Another point of light on the problem of suffering is given when we watch our Lord's attitude to the sufferer. To those who "received Him," and had thereby received "the right to become children of God," He

* John v. 14.

† Luke xiii. 4.

‡ John v. 28; vi. 39, 40.

held out the promise of Eternal Life, completing and perfecting the broken life that now is. But His help did not confine itself to them alone. What was His bearing toward the many others of whom we do not read that they followed Him? One thing strikes us at once in the Gospel story—our Lord's great compassion for all who were overburdened and crushed and desolate. There is a word used by all the Synoptists, and echoed by John in his First Epistle, which is profoundly moving. It is the word which speaks of the pity of Jesus.* "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness. But when He saw the multitudes He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, like shepherdless sheep" (Matt. ix. 35, 36). His eyes saw beyond their outward condition, and He beheld them mangled† by spiritual wolves, prostrated‡ with spiritual hunger, and His heart bled for them. We remember that those who recorded

* *ἐσπλαγχνίσθη*. Used of Jesus in Mark i. 41, vi. 34 (and parallels) viii. 2, Matt. xx. 34, Luke vii. 13. He used it Himself in Matt. xviii. 27, Luke xv. 20. The word is *τὰ σπλάγχνα* in 1 John iii. 17.

† *ἐσκυλμένοι* (hunted, "worried").

‡ *ἐρριμένοι* (sunk powerless).

these things, or meditated on them, thought of Jesus as the representative of God. So John writes, "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his pity from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" Those who had beheld the Father in the life of Jesus, spoke of God as "the Lord, full of pity, and merciful" (James v. 11).

Now pity, like humour, springs from the contrast between what is and what ought to be. Our Lord's pity for men sprang from His conception of the difference between their actual condition—whether of sin or sorrow—and the perfection and happiness which God had intended for them. Sickness, for example, sometimes disturbed the continuity of God's rule. Health was God's will for men, therefore health was the normal state, and Jesus regarded it as an urgent duty to restore it, wherever He found His hands set free to do so. In the case of the woman bowed down with infirmity, there is a ring of protest in His words—protest not only against the narrow prejudice which would postpone her cure, but against that which had afflicted her. "You loose an ox and lead it to the water on the Sabbath; and this woman here, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen

years,"—how many Sabbaths!—"*ought* she not to be loosed from her bond on the day of the Sabbath?"* That "*ought*" points to something in the very nature of God, for Whom Jesus acted, and whose will it was that not the feeblest should perish. Premature death, again, seems to have been regarded by Jesus as abnormal. We read of three instances where He came in contact with it, and in each case He restored the life too early lost. Indeed, He refused to use the word "death," unless He was driven to it. If His friend Lazarus dies of his sickness, Jesus says he has "fallen asleep" (John xi. 11), and only when His disciples misunderstand, does He say plainly that he is dead. As the Fourth Gospel shows, He kept this word for something more deadly than physical decease.†

Jesus, then, looked upon the world, as God intended it to be, as full of freedom, light, love and life. But His vision of the ideal and the perfect world, did not deceive Him into any misjudgment of its present and actual state. Whether the reference to "the Regeneration" in Matt. xix. 28‡ refers to the act of judgment by which the glorified Son of Man

* Luke xiii. 15-16.

† John v. 24, vi. 50, etc.

‡ παλινγενεσία.

will close the present order, or whether it refers to the triumph of His Kingdom in this age, it is certain that Jesus regards the world as being in as much need of re-birth as is the individual soul of man (Matt. xviii. 3 and John iii. 3). He looked upon the world as God's field, sown with God's seed, but He did not deny the fact implied in the question, "Whence then, hath it tares?" He knew that God is supreme, but He saw that His supremacy was challenged. There was rebellion in the empire. That challenge to the rule of God, Jesus traced to two sources; first, to the activities of Satan, and second, to the misuse by man of the freedom of his will. On the latter of these subjects something will be said in our concluding chapter; let us turn to the thought of the Lord about the former.

Whatever may be the philosophical consequences, the fair-minded student of the Gospels is driven to the conclusion that Jesus believed in the existence of supernatural agents, both good and bad. Some critics would discredit the references to "Satan," on the ground that they were introduced by editors who were touched by the eschatology of later Judaism. But when all is said, the belief that behind the confusion and corruption

of the world stands the malignant adversary of God, remains one of the most characteristic features of our's Lord's thinking. He Himself had come, the Stronger Man, to bind the strong and to spoil his goods (Mark iii. 27). In the struggle with evil, He found Himself engaged in desperate conflict with "the prince of this world," whose defeat was assured because he would find nothing in Jesus on which he could lay his destroying grip (John xiv. 30). Our Lord regarded Satan as "the leader or ruler of the world, so far as it stands in hostile opposition to the will and character of God."* He is the enemy who sows tares among the wheat (Matt. xiii. 28-39). In all the history of the world, Jesus thought of the sword of God as drawn against the foe who was sworn to spoil His plans. And because God's plans for man include the blessing of physical health, as well as of moral perfection, our Lord saw in certain types of disease an evidence of the malignant enmity of Satan.

The phenomenon of demoniacal possession is very common in the Gospels. St. Mark records in some detail eighteen miracles. Four of them are cases of deliverance from this trouble,† and in them Jesus is represented as

* Wendt, "Teaching of Jesus," i, p, 165, ii, p. 254.

† Mark i. 23, v. 2, vii. 25, ix. 18.

using such words as "Hold thy peace* and come out of him." In addition, we find in the same Gospel, eight references, without details, either to cases where Jesus Himself cast out devils, or to commissions given by Him to His disciples to do this.† It is plain that Jesus accepted and endorsed the current explanation. In the hearing of the distracted father at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus said, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee come out of Him." And in private He explained to His disciples, not that it was a case of purely natural disease, but that "this kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer" (Mark ix. 25-29). In our modern terms we may ascribe these symptoms to epilepsy or insanity, but our terms do not, of necessity, rule out as incorrect our Lord's view of the source of the trouble. "There is, in fact, strong evidence, to show that Jesus did believe in the reality of demon-possession, and we, who are appointed to live in an age which often seems to be demon-ridden, are not so ready as were the men of the last generation to scout the idea as mere superstition."‡

* φιμώθητι, "Be muzzled."

† Mark i. 32, 39, iii. 11, 15, 22, vi. 7 [xvi. 9, 17].

‡ Findlay, "Jesus as They Saw Him," i, p. 44f.

Rather in modern psychological research does there seem to be room for the viewpoint of Jesus; and the evidence for the real existence of malign and non-human agencies is not weakened by some of the dire effects brought about by amateur dabbling in Spiritism.

The fact that our Lord believed in supernatural evil agents who strive to seduce and afflict mankind, does not diminish His recognition of human responsibility. Nor does the weakness of human nature lessen His sense of its worth. His outlook upon the world included a view of man as part of, and yet apart from, the world in which he lives. Jesus is in agreement with the best thought of all time regarding the discipline of Nature as being ordained for the training and perfecting of man. As already seen in the first chapter of this book, He looked upon labour as a blessing. Foresight He commends as a virtue (Luke xiv. 28, xvi. 9), though He condemns anxiety as a useless squandering of vital forces.* Suffering

* Luke xii. 25, 26. M.V. argues that ἡλικία is "age," not "stature," and the note is too good to miss. "We cannot resist expressing amazement that anyone should call it ἐλαχιστον (that which is least) to add half-a-yard to one's height. The twentieth century translators boldly render, "Which of you, by being anxious, can prolong his life a moment?" and we cannot but applaud them. That worry *shortens* life is the fact that adds point to the irony. The desire to turn a six-footer into a Goliath is rather a bizarre ambition."

itself is a school in which the prize is the winning of a complete life (Luke xxi. 19, R.V.). Yet, subject as he is to so many and so varied influences which tend to make or mar his character, man stands responsible in virtue of his freedom of choice. He has inner resources which lift him above circumstances, and, rightly used, make him proof against the encroachments of outward defilement (Luke xi. 41 R.V.).

The same lesson of responsibility is carried by our Lord's teaching in Mark vii. 14. The Pharisees would make a man a sinner because of a breach of the law of cleanness which, possibly, was unintentional or even unavoidable. Jesus, in opposition, says, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing from without the man that going into him can defile him, but the things which proceed out of the man are those which defile the man. . . . For from within, out of the heart of man, evil thoughts proceed and defile him." No matter therefore what he may appear to be, when judged by standards such as the ceremonial law of cleanness, the real man only appears to the searching eye of God. "Behind every man's external life, which he leads in company, there is another which he leads alone,

and which he carries with him apart. We see but one aspect of our neighbour, as we see but one half of the moon ; in either case there is also a dark half, which is unknown to us. We all come down to dinner but each has a room to himself." Our Lord's words about this "hidden man of the heart,"† imply that He held that just there is the seat of the consenting will, and that the consent is, in the last analysis, free. Whatever may be the origin of evil in the Cosmos, here is the source of evil in the person. Man is free, therefore he is responsible.

Our Lord's world-view, as one of the elements in His conception of God, is further illustrated by His estimate of the relation between God and man, and of man's intrinsic worth. Apart from the influence of Jesus, the best people of all religions succeed only in becoming aristocrats. There is a kink somewhere in their estimate of the value of human nature. The Jew, whose ethical standard has only once been surpassed, was taught to pay all consideration to his unfortunate brother, remembering always that his own fathers were bondmen in the land of Egypt (Deut. xv. 12-15, xxiv. 17-18). But

* Bagehot, Literary Studies, "Shakespeare, the Man."

† Cf. 1 Peter iii. 4.

this did not obliterate his grudge against the Egyptian, and for the most part he relegated all who were not of his race or faith to the undesirable company kept by the hindmost. One may obtain a sure index of the thought of any man about human nature, as such, if one knows what he really thinks about woman; and here, the Pharisee, Plato and Mohammed all fail together. It is a platitude to say that womanhood was first crowned by Jesus, but the consequences of that coronation reach further than the rescue of a sex. To crown womanhood is to crown the race.

Let us see how Jesus works this out, for it is He alone, of all the great teachers, who sees the secret greatness of mankind. "There came unto Him Pharisees and asked Him—'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?' And He answered, 'What did Moses command you?' and they said, 'Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.' But Jesus said, 'For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh, so that they are no more twain, but one flesh.

What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder' " (Mark x. 2-9). " For this cause," that is, because both man and woman have equal status in the eyes of God. Between God and humanity there is a kinship of nature, and Jesus taught that the secret of the kinship lay far below the distinctions of sex, nationality, or rank, on which we put so much stress.

Can anyone read the Gospels without seeing that Jesus loved men intensely? For the sake of their kinship with God, for the sake of the possibilities that lay in them, He gave His whole life to saving and blessing them. By His gentleness He sought to make them great. Where hypocrisy would use the gift of God for selfish ends, or where wilful blindness refused to see His outstretched hand, He failed. But with some He succeeded. His love was keen-eyed, and below the impulsiveness of Peter, the slowness of Thomas, the enslavement of the Magdalene,* He saw the traces of the Divine likeness. So great was His love of humanity that one of His most characteristic sayings is, " Do good, despairing of no man " (Luke vi. 35 R.V. margin).

* Whatever may have been the form of Mary's trouble, her deliverance was a noteworthy example of the insight of Jesus. (Luke viii. 2).

In a great Midland town there are men who sell the dust of their workshops—as if one should be paid by someone anxious to do his spring-cleaning! The dust is swept up, taken away and refined. What is left is of value, for the men who sell the dust are workers in gold and precious stones. So Jesus, loving human nature as it is, for the gold that is in it, bought it with His own life, that He might refine its dross and restore in it the defaced image of Him who created it.

To sum up. Our Lord's view of the world led Him to affirm its Divine origin, and therefore, its spiritual purpose. A mechanical theory of the universe finds as little place in His teaching as does materialism of any other kind. Over the world thus Divinely created, God rules by a beneficent Providence, which cares both for the bodily welfare of men, and for the growth and training of the spirit. But God's rule is not unchallenged, and behind much of the disorder of life Jesus saw the hand of a malignant enemy. Still more, in the waywardness of man's will Jesus perceived the seat of personal sin. Here again a determinist philosophy is foreign to His mind. Sin would be impossible if there were no freedom of choice. But it is that very

freedom on which our Lord based His thoughts of the worth of man as man; to a free will He addressed His call of repentance; and, finally, in that freedom, Divinely bestowed, He saw the possibilities of man's restoration to a filial fellowship with God. God, the Universe, and Man—a trinity bound up together by love—that is the vision of Jesus, and for its realisation He gave His life. And the ultimate truth of philosophy, as of evangelism, is in John's summary of the inner mind of our Lord—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Chapter VIII

OUR LORD'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

(ii) His View of Duty and Destiny

"When thou sayest the 'Our Father,' take as the foundation, 'Thy will be done.'"—Catherine of Genoa (1477-1510).

Another view of our Lord's conception of God will appear, if we enquire as to what He thought of Duty and Destiny. The sense in which He read the purpose of His own life, is evident from the use He made of the text of His first recorded sermon.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;
He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke iv. 18-19).

His comment on this is, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears" (v. 21).

Now one who thinks of his life as under the control of God may do so in one of two ways.

To him, God is either Lawgiver or Father. This may be variously expressed, but ultimately these are the alternatives. Theism puts a man under law or under grace, according as it is Jewish or Christian Theism. And this is the difference between the Pharisaic interpretation of life and duty, and that of Jesus. The Pharisees thought of duty and destiny as obligation and its reward, legally fixed and administered. Jesus also thought of obligation and its reward, but of both as falling within the sphere of filial love.

Our Lord's thought about God is regulated throughout by His knowledge of Him as Father. It is true that He was not the first to use the name. There are some instances in the Old Testament where God is directly termed the Father of His People (Deut. xxxii. 6; Isaiah lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8; Malachi i. 6), and others which speak of Israel, or its King, as His son (Psalm ii. 7; Hosea xi. 1; Jer. xxxi. 20 etc.) In two passages the Psalmists have a view of God which nearly approaches the exalted thought of the New Testament. In Psalm lxviii. 5 He is " the Father of the fatherless and a judge of the widow," while in Psalm ciii. 13 we read that, " like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear

him." Rare as is the use of this term in the Old Testament, it is rarer still in the Apocrypha, and in the Mishna it occurs first in the sayings of Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkenos, who lived towards the end of the first century after Christ. But turn to the teaching of Jesus, and at once the term emerges, both in the Synoptists and in John, as our Lord's usual name for God. Professor Herford would have us believe that, in His conception of the Fatherhood of God, Jesus made no advance on the accepted doctrine of the Scribes. He points out that no Pharisee ever challenged Him on this subject, for the reason that they shared His belief. "It was the spiritual inheritance of the Jew, into which he entered by natural piety, and from which neither the unlearned nor the Scribe was excluded."* But a spiritual inheritance may be rich or poor, and, in this case it was poor. For the pious Jew did not lay stress on the love of God, but upon His Law. The former he acknowledged, but it was the latter by which he regulated his life. Jesus, however, taking the Law as He found it—refined, enlarged, interpreted by the traditions of men, till it had become a burden grievous to be borne—threw the

* R. Travers Herford, "Pharisaism," pp. 119-126.

emphasis of His teaching upon the other side of the activity and character of God, and called Him not King, but Father. "The Law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man (not even Moses, Exodus xxxiii. 20) hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him."

Jesus' conception of duty and destiny rests on, and is an indication of His conception of God. What, then, has He to say of duty?

To the Pharisee the whole duty of man is the fulfilling of the Law. Jesus agreed, but where He differed was in His reading of what the Law is. In Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says (Ch. v. 17), "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." But He immediately adds, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The paragraphs which follow, up to the end of Chapter vi. 18, are illustrations of some points in which the

righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees falls short of complete fulfilling of the Law, as Jesus interprets it.

Just as Jesus looked upon the order of the world as having an inner and moral meaning which points to the character of its Creator, and apart from which neither God nor the universe can be understood, so He thought of the Law. The Scribes read the Law in the letter, binding and unalterable for ever. Jesus, on the other hand, looked for the spirit within the letter, and it was here that He came into the sharpest conflict with the religious leaders of His day. Take, for example, the Law of the Sabbath Day. The clash between Jesus and His critics is made clear by Professor Herford, who says, after quoting Mark iii. 1-6, "It is evident that the narrator of that story did not love the Pharisees, and it would not be unreasonable to take a heavy discount off it on the ground of prejudice. But we may leave all that out of account. Jesus challenged the Pharisees to say whether, according to the Torah,* He might or might

* "Torah" is the Jewish name for the whole body of Law. Its base is the Law of Moses. But one must also include the comments and enlargements of "the Wise"—written and unwritten—as referred to on pp. 102ff. All parts of Torah were alike binding, as a complete expression of the Will of God.

not cure the man on the Sabbath. If He got no answer, it was certainly not because they had no answer to give. They would say, " Why do on the Sabbath what could be done on another day, if the doing of it would break the Sabbath ? The Torah says that the Sabbath is to be kept holy, and this is done by refraining from certain kinds of action, in themselves perfectly right and proper. We believe that the right way of fulfilling the Torah—doing the Will of God—is to do so-and-so. And we believe that in order to save life, when it is in danger, it is the will of God that we should break the Sabbath, in any way that may be necessary. But that we should not break it for any less urgent cause. Here is this man with a withered hand. He is in no immediate danger. Certainly it is a good thing to cure him. But why not have cured him before ? And if his cure should stand over for a day, is that so great a harm to one who has been some time in that condition, that the Sabbath must be made to give way to it ? " That is the sort of answer the Pharisees would make. Of course the rejoinder is ready to hand, that to do good is right on any day, Sabbath or no Sabbath. But that is not the point. The challenge of Jesus was Is it *lawful* ? i.e. Is it in accordance

with Torah? And the Pharisees were perfectly justified in holding that it was not in accordance with Torah. If Jesus interpreted Torah in another sense, that was His affair; and they would not be the more disposed to agree with Him if it be true that He "looked round on them in anger." His anger was in effect an attack on Torah, whatever His intention might be."*

That is a fair putting of the issue which arose between our Lord and those who accused Him, at least as stated from their side. But what is it that Jesus, from His side, is endeavouring to make clear? He is challenging the Pharisees' interpretation of Torah as the Will of God. Can it be the Will of God that anyone should remain in pain or disability a day longer than is necessary, when the means to set him free are present, here and now? If that is the Will of God, what sort of God is He? If the holiness of God, a holiness which is imparted to the Sabbath, is of such an order that His power is not permitted to do a work of mercy on the Sabbath—then for those hours every week His eyes must be shut, and His hands tied. It is of no use to call on Him in prayer for deliverance from pain on

* Pharisaism," pp. 145ff.

that day. You may worship Him on that day, but you must not trespass on His holy rest! In the train of thought here, and in the similar story of the healing of the woman bowed down with infirmity (Luke xiii. 10-17), we see the intertwining of our Lord's conception of the true meaning of Law, of the real value of human nature, and of the essential character of God as determining both.

To such an one as man is, a cast iron code of rules, changing only in the direction of greater rigidity, is inapplicable. And the corollary of that is, that such an one as God is, could never have His Will expressed in lifeless forms. Certain great principles, fixed and eternal as His own character, there are, to be sure; but the difference between principles and an ever-growing system of mere rules, is like the difference between personality and parchment, between the living judge and the old statutes which he interprets and applies to present circumstances. In the view of Jesus, there is elasticity in the Will of God, an elasticity which befits both the free Personality of the Divine Father, and the derived freedom of His children. So, when Jesus through the divine power showed that the mercy of God was not to be bounded by legal tyranny, we

cannot wonder that "all the multitude rejoiced for all the wonderful things that were done by Him" (Luke xiii. 17), for He had shown them a new view of God, and of themselves as God saw them.

But if Jesus emphasised the elasticity of the Law, He also taught its deep and far-reaching meaning. We have spoken of His perception of the inwardness of things. It comes out most clearly here. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath commited adultery with her already in his heart." That is an interpretation of the Law which appeals at once as both reasonable, and terrible in its justice. No code of rules can bind the wandering eye and the erring thought. But "if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell" (Matt. v. 27-29).

Now if the Law had only been something external, with codes and rules and exceptions all duly set forth, and made applicable to all possible circumstances, it is conceivable that a man might keep it who only feared God, or

who, if he once dared, would even rebel against Him. At the very best, a man who was so wrapped up in keeping the Law might almost put it in the place of God. And that is just what happened. "Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath . . . but he that sweareth by the temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein" (Matt. xxiii. 16, 21). In their zeal for what was outward, the Scribes forgot Him who is the Dweller in the innermost. To be quite just, we must however admit that not all of them were insincere. The rich young man who asked Jesus about eternal life probably belonged to the Pharisaic class. So sincere was he that Jesus, reading his heart, loved him. But the stress he had always placed on obedience to an outward Law was his undoing, when he was faced with the inwardness of the demand of duty. "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The thing he "lacked" and of which he "fell short" (Mark) was exactly that about which he was enquiring—*life*, life that could oust a wrong motive and supply a right one, life

that could count earthly goods as nothing, and would seek its good, not in gaining, but in giving, not in possession but in service.*

The keeping of such a Law, and the doing of such a duty, as Jesus inculcated, will be seen to be a matter of the heart, and only secondarily of outward obedience.† Jesus emphasises motive as determining conduct, both in its issue and in its quality. Conduct, seemingly orthodox, is vitiated by bad motive. "The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. xii. 35). The only motive adequate for such a life as Jesus demanded is pure, unselfish love. And since this Law demands love, it must find its origin in love. So our Lord says that the Scribe was "not far from the Kingdom of God," who replied to His quotation of the Shema (Deut. vi. 4, 5) as being the first and greatest commandment, by saying, "Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that He is One, and there is none other but He, and to love Him

* The story of the Young Ruler should be carefully studied in all three accounts (Matt. xix. 16-29, Mark x. 17-22, Luke xviii. 18-30). Each has touches of its own. Mark's addition of μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς ("defraud no one of his rights"), may possibly point to an uneasy consciousness that zeal for the letter of the Law did not always result in strict honesty.

† Cf. Rom. xiii. 10, James ii. 8, 1 John iv. 17-21, 1 Peter iv. 7-8, passages which spring directly from our Lord's interpretation of the Law.

with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifice (Mark xii. 32, 33). Such a life of love could only be demanded by a God who is Love.

By another path we arrive at a similar understanding, when we examine what was our Lord's view of personal destiny. Here, as in the former part of our study, we find the witness of the Synoptists and of John in close agreement. In the Sermon at Nazareth, already quoted, Jesus said that He was *sent* to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. To a Gentile woman He said, "I was not *sent* but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). In one of His last parables He tells His enemies how God, having sent prophets and leaders to His people, "afterwards sent His Son" (Matt. xxi. 37). In St. John no phrase is more common than that in which Jesus speaks of "Him that *sent* Me."*

* The phrase occurs forty-two times in St. John. In twenty-five the word is πέμπω, which marks the immediate relation of the sender to the sent. In seventeen the verb is ἀποστέλλω, which conveys the accessory notion of a special commission, and so far of a delegated authority in the person sent. Both are combined in John xx. 21, "As the Father hath commissioned (ἀπέσταλκεν) Me, so I send (πέμπω) you." See Westcott *in loc.* There are examples from non-literary sources which almost warrant us in saying that while Jesus holds the King's Commission, His followers are but His "orderlies" (see M.V. on these words).

A word so often on the lips of Jesus is no mere accident, but indicates a thought that was constantly before His mind, the thought of His Mission. He did not regard Himself as being here by chance. His coming had been prepared, and its purpose reached far beyond His own day.

Jesus was a diligent student of the history of His people. To the casual observer that history is perplexing. The Jews were ever a stiff-necked nation. Their maze-like wanderings in the wilderness are a picture of after happenings. They left slavery behind in Goshen, and cried after its fleshpots. They called themselves the people of Jehovah, and made a golden calf for their worship. They were again and again delivered by judges and heroes from their own ranks, and clamoured for a king who would turn out to be an oppressor. They obtained their king, and revolted against him. They killed their prophets, and honoured their bones by building splendid tombs over them. They arrived finally at the conception of One Only God, and put a code of laws between themselves and Him. Was there ever a more hopeless people?

So far the casual observer sees. Jesus, on the other hand, reading deeply into the past,

sees a chain of unyielding purpose which culminated in Himself and His Mission. In no age had God been left without witness. Even when the whole head of the nation was sick, and the whole heart faint, Isaiah could speak of the "remnant" that should save them from becoming like Sodom or Gomorrah, a tenth that should be like the stock that is remaining when the tree is felled.* At His advent Jesus had been welcomed by Simeon and Anna, true successors to Isaiah's remnant, representatives of those who waited for the salvation of God. From our own vantage-point in time, we can to-day see how splendidly the Jewish nation bore its witness to the One true God.† With all its faults and vicissitudes, it formed the only possible "seed plot for Christianity." We, like Paul, see the chain complete as we look at "Israel, whose is the adoption (in Abraham) and the glory (of Sinai), and the covenants (with the patriarchs), and the giving of the Law (to Moses), and the service of God (in sanctuary and temple), and the promises (to David and the prophets); whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix.

* Isaiah i. 8, 9, vi. 13, x. 20-22.

† Wendt, "Teaching of Jesus," i, pp. 33ff.

4-5). All this was present in the mind of Jesus, and it gave to Him a tremendous sense of destiny, which lies behind His phrase, "He that sent Me." We are not concerned to discuss the moment at which this consciousness of mission and destiny broke upon Him. Neither are we concerned as to any modifications that may have taken place in the way in which He interpreted His mission. Most of the arguments about these two points impress the unsophisticated student as being based on guess-work, and as springing from a desire to find a place for Jesus in the ranks of ordinary men. The thing which is emphasised by those who wrote the Gospel Memoirs is that Jesus emerged into public life saying—

> "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me
> Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings,
> He hath sent Me to proclaim release,"

and that at every stage of His public life He was busy with doing the will of Him that sent Him.

All this points to a definite conception about God which Jesus held. For the moment we say nothing about His knowledge of His own peculiar relation to God, which is formulated in the Church's doctrine of His Pre-existence with the Father. We speak rather of the

thought that was in His mind as He lived and worked among men. Here was He, entrusted with the latest link in a chain of age-long intention. Many a time men had tried deliberately to break the chain. The rust of indifference and ignorance had bitten into it. Unworthy hands had been employed, all unknown to themselves, to forge some of its parts. But, in spite of all, here was the latest link, and it lay in the hands of Jesus. He knew that He had been "appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2).

It would not be true to say that the opponents of Jesus did not believe in the purpose of God. But their belief lacked the spontaneity and exhilaration which marked the teaching of our Lord. It was based on the legal relation which in their view, existed between God and man. "Every act of obedience was regarded as having an exact recompense, and every blessing to be obtained as requiring previous service."* As a consequence, when a Pharisee said "I must," however sincere and pure-hearted he was, he was apt to mean a different thing from that which Jesus meant. The Pharisee would say, "I must do God's will, which has been once and for all revealed in fixed and stated Law."

* Wendt, op. cit., i, p. 40.

Jesus said, "My meat is to do the Will of him that sent me and to accomplish his work" (John iv. 34). That "work" was infinite in its variety and in its scope. So the destiny, the Divinely-ordered purpose, to which God called men, and Jesus above all others, extended far beyond the bounds of written or traditional law. Jesus was as one who stands on an upland moor, and sees the open road stretching before him, till it climbs and crosses the distant hills. The call of such a road is, to an open-air man, "like an invitation to Eternity." There is exhilaration and adventure in it. New discoveries await one who will press forward. One thinks of our Lord's courage for present duty, and of His joyous confidence for the future, as summed up in the great Wisdom-word which He must often have read: "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, for surely there is a sequel, and thy hope shall not be cut off."*

Now what sort of God is He who thus reigned in the heart of Jesus? He is the God of present duty, who looks for motive in the heart of those who would obey Him. Apparent failure may be to Him true success. His will is done step by step, moment by moment.

* Proverbs, xxiii. 17, 18 (R.V. margin).

But He is also the God of the Eternal Purpose. We can only dimly guess at the glory and the dignity of the Godhead which was present in the mind of Jesus, as He quoted the great words, "I AM the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob," and added, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Eternity is the soil in which hope grows, and because Jesus believed in the Eternal Purpose, fulfilling itself in many ways, He was able to teach His disciples to pray, as doubtless He Himself prayed, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come."

Chapter IX

OUR LORD'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

(iii) His Habits of Prayer

> "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house :
> They will be still praising thee.
> They go from strength to strength
> Every one of them appeareth before God in Zion."
> —Psalm lxxxiv.

Nowhere can a man's thought of God be more accurately gauged than in his habits of prayer. If he thinks there is no God, he will not pray at all ; if he only prays when in *extremis*, his God is a last resort. If he thinks of God as real, ever present, merciful and holy, his prayer will deepen into humble obedience and loving fellowship, and his faith will regulate all his life and conduct.

For our present purpose we shall treat the prayers of Jesus as being of two kinds, public and private. But before going into details, let us pause for a moment to dwell on the fact that He did pray. Two things about Jesus have perplexed men, and in opposite ways. An older school, laying little stress on His humanity,

was at a loss to explain the reality of His prayers and of His temptations. It is a wonder that they did not drop the Epistle to the Hebrews (e.g. v. 8) from their Canon! The newer extremists, shy of the thought of His Divinity, fail to account for, though they acknowledge, His perfect character. Prayer is so essentially human, sinlessness so exclusively divine. Of these perplexities the New Testament knows nothing. Its writers, though by tradition and conviction they believed that "Jehovah our God is One Lord," hold an even balance between the two aspects of our Lord's nature, and they are not afraid to take the consequences, and to confess that there are some things in that nature that cannot be reduced to human logic.

Most people would agree with Marcus Aurelius that it is as human to pray as it is divine to answer. "Who told you that the gods do not assist us? Begin to pray, and you will see."* In a world like ours it is not always easy to see what ought to be done, still less easy to do it. So closely does the material press upon the spiritual, that it is no child's play to keep steadily in view the thought of duty and of heavenly destiny. Unless one has sunk

* "Meditations," ix. 40.

below the line of manhood,* he will find that life is a battle with temptation, which will overwhelm him if he is not succoured from above. Even if (as in the case of our Lord) the will does not consent to the temptation, it will feel the torture of the presence of the evil which it hates, and will seek relief in communion with the Highest. This consideration lies at the root of the age-long habit of prayer, and in some measure accounts for the large place taken in the thought and imagination of the New Testament writers by the prayers of Jesus. To what sort of God did He pray ?

Let us look first at His habits in public prayer. We do not read of "prayers" as forming part of the liturgical services of the Temple. "With one exception (Deut. xxvi. 1-15) there is nothing about prayer in the Law. It is not recognised as a means of doing service, but it is left to be a spontaneous expression of human needs."† But because the Temple was the place of sacrifice, it was naturally used by the devout as a place of private prayer (Acts iii. 1). Those who would abuse or hinder this possibility felt the full weight of our

* A judge in the fourth century, A.D., passing sentence of death on a criminal, is recorded to have said, "It seems to me that you have the soul of a beast, and not of a man—nay, indeed, not even of a beast."

† Hastings D.B., iv, p. 39b.

Lord's indignation (Luke xix. 46, xviii. 10ff.). He Himself was allowed little leisure for the exercise of the privilege (John vii. 10, 11, x. 23, 24; Mark xi. 27, xii.).

But there were the Synagogues, and here the case is different. They were scattered all over the land, and their purpose was to provide opportunities for public instruction and worship. "The chief parts of the Synagogue's service were, according to the Mishna, the recitation of the Shema (Deut. vi. 4-5); prayer, the reading of the Torah and the blessing of the Priest. It was the custom to pray standing,* and with the face turned toward the Holy of Holies, i.e., towards Jerusalem. The prayer was not uttered by the whole congregation, but by someone called upon for this office by the ruler of the Synagogue, the congregation making only certain responses, especially the Amen. He who pronounced the prayer stepped in front of the chest in which lay the rolls of the Law. Every adult member of the congregation was competent to do this. The same individual who said the prayer might also recite the Shema, read the lesson from the Prophets, and, if he were a priest, pronounce the blessing."†

* Matt. vi. 5; Mark xi. 25; Luke xviii. 11.

† Schurer, "History of Jewish People," ii, 2, pp. 77-79.

In such public worship it was the custom of Jesus to join, and not infrequently, at least in His early ministry, He would be called upon to lead it (Luke iv. 16).

It has grown to be the habit of the Christian to think of the Jew as a formalist. The charge is not fair if it be made universally. Formalism is not the patent of the Jew. The prayers of the Synagogue were as much, and as little, liable to degenerate into mere form as is the liturgy of any Christian Church. In their original meaning they express lofty sentiments of faith and reverence. "Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God Most Holy." "Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have transgressed; ready to pardon and forgive Thou art." "O restore our judges as formerly, and our counsellors as at the beginning, and remove from us sorrow and sighing, and reign over us, Thou O Lord alone, in grace and mercy, and justify us. Blessed art Thou, O Lord the King, for Thou lovest righteousness and justice." These are extracts from the Shemoneh Esreh, which, though in its present form dating after 70 A.D., is based on a form much more ancient.* Like many of the Psalms used in public worship, it

* Ibid, pp. 85-87.

breathes a spirit of deepest veneration for the Holy Name. It recalls the great days of Israel. It points to the Purpose of Jehovah as manifested in the history of His people. Such worship, truly offered, implies a great conception of God.

Jesus said comparatively little about public worship. That was because public worship was universal, and He had therefore no need to enforce its observance. But the fact that He joined in it is significant. He also took these prayers upon His lips. He joined with His countrymen in reverence at the feet of God. He turned His face, with them, to Jerusalem, the city of His fathers, and of His fathers' God. He had no need to confess any sin of His own, but we cannot doubt that He mourned the sins of His people. He saw all of the truth about God which they saw, and if His knowledge of the Most High was greater than theirs, the God they worshipped was His God also.

In the Synagogue services prominence was given to the reading and expounding of the Law (see Acts xv. 21). To a sincere and intelligent hearer, this would bring two main thoughts about God, which form the chief part of the contribution of Judaism to religion. First the Law bears witness to the Divine Holiness.

It is true that, in large measure, this witness is conveyed in elaborate ceremonial, such as washing of hands, refraining from contact with "unclean" substances, and so forth; and herein no great advance was made on the ideas of holiness current in heathen cults. But the main emphasis of the Law is ethical. "Righteous art Thou, O Lord." "The righteous Lord loved righteousness." It was not the fault of the Law if this lofty idea of the character of God broke away into that of His total separation from a sinful world. Rather should it have resulted in such penitence and such obedience, as should restore the worshipper to pardon and peace. These indeed are the hopes that breathe through the prayer quoted above, with which every Jew was familiar.

In the second place, the Law bears witness to the special relation between Jehovah and His people. He is "the Holy One of Israel." So another element in the Synagogue worship was that of Praise. "Praise waiteth for thee, O God in Zion." "Praise is comely for the upright." "The Lord is great and worthy to be praised." These expressions of adoration mark the sense of the nearness of God to those who truly worship. The character of Jewish

praise implies that God has made a special revelation of Himself to His chosen people. If that revelation is a showing of His transcendent holiness, it is also a showing of His gracious condescension. "He is nigh unto them that are of a contrite spirit." "Though the Lord be high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly."

In this worship it was "the custom" of Jesus to join. Sabbath by Sabbath He identified Himself with His people in their prayers. As He took the time-honoured words upon His lips, He read into and out of them the spirit and the lessons they were originally intended to convey. He translated them into a more modern and a more universal significance "The hour cometh, when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not, we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John iv. 21-24). These great words, spoken to one who was not a Jew, epitomise, as do no other words, the ideas of Jesus about God as

shown in His habits of public prayer. They set forth the original and primitive intention of the Jewish liturgy and law—to glorify and to impart the perfect holiness of Jehovah. They hint at the breakdown of that intention through the unfaithfulness of the nation to whom so great a trust had been committed. They reveal the fact that that unfaithfulness had not defeated the purpose of God to draw men to Himself—the Father seeketh true worshippers still; and finally, they show the universality of the love of the Holy God, who will not confine His grace to those who worship "in this mountain or in Jerusalem," and will not hide Himself from men, inasmuch as He is the Father of all.

A close study of these thoughts of our Lord will make clear that only through corporate worship can they become real to the individual. Not through solitude do men come to understand God as the universal Father. Not in isolation do they come to see that Righteousness is a social, as well as a personal, obligation. The neglect of public worship in our day comes from a decay of the sense of the reality of God—not always on the part of "the pew" alone—and the neglect of worship in turn deepens that fatal ignorance. And those who speak of

the futility and failure of organised religion, and who do not contribute anything toward breathing life once more into the organism, are hindering the rebirth of the sense of God. In the mind of Jesus the " custom " of public worship was a necessity, for it kept alive the knowledge of the reality, the holiness, and the universal love of the Father of all spirits.*

Our Lord's habits of public worship do not speak to us only of His conception of the character of God. They tell us of His thought of the continuity of Divine activity and purpose in History. Early in 1915 the writer was walking down King's Parade in Cambridge with a young 'Varsity friend. As we got inside the gate of King's College, the sound of the organ reached us from the Chapel. It was the time of Evensong. We stopped and listened, and through the darkness every now and then we could hear the clear voices of the choristers as they sang. My friend was a member of the College, and he had all the pride of a " Kingsman " in the history of the place. " Isn't it fine," said he, " to think that those old Zepps. make no difference to that service. I suppose it has been going on ever since the Wars of the

* There is a fine passage on this subject in Robertson Smith, " Prophets of Israel," pp. 96, 97.

Roses, without a break except in vacations. Napoleon thought he could do a lot, but he didn't stop that. The boys have been singing there all through the centuries, and they'll sing when the Kaiser is only a memory." So must Jesus have thought when He joined in the Synagogue services. The praises that were offered to God in His hearing, had been offered in the wilderness, the Sanctuary, the Temple: they had ascended, though mingled with tears and sighs, from the banks of the Great River in the days of the captivity. And on that very day, as He worshipped in Galilee, in almost every city of the Empire a scattered nation turned its face to Jerusalem, and repeated the praises of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. "I am the Lord, I change not," would be a message continually borne in upon His mind. And though His people were to make the great refusal, He saw, with mingled sorrow and joy, that others would take up the song, until the glory of the Lord should cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*

We turn now to the study of the habits of our Lord in Private Prayer. Various reasons render this aim very difficult to attain. In

* Our Lord's sense of the continuity of the purpose of God in history is shown in His parable of the Vineyard in Matt. xxi. 33-44, and especially in verses 42, 43.

the first place, the Gospels tell us but little of any actual petitions as offered by Him. He seems to have prayed for the most part "in secret" (Matt. vi. 6). The second reason lies deeper, but follows on the first. To understand fully the prayer-habits of any other person, we must at least be his spiritual equals. Of no other saint, nor indeed of all the saints together, can it be said that there is any who is equal to our Lord, or capable of understanding Him. The inner life of any man is, on one side, made up of those "particular concrete experiences which alone move men and help to determine their will, but which are untransferable and indeed unrepeatable,"* and especially is this true of the prayer-life of our Lord. In the words and in the life of Jesus, there seems always to be something that lies beyond the horizon which bounds our vision, beyond the words which are the currency of our understanding. Both spiritually and intellectually we are ill-equipped to comprehend Him. It must, therefore, be with the keenest sense of unworthiness and inability that we venture toward some understanding of the thought of God that was in our Lord's mind as He prayed.

* Von Hügel, "Mystical Element in Religion," vol. i, p. 11.

And first we note His hunger for privacy. His was the busiest of lives. He had so much to give, that all who could reach Him crowded to touch even the hem of His garment (Matt. xiv. 36). He was sometimes denied leisure so much as to eat (Mark iii. 20 ; vi. 31). When He removed from one place to another, the eager crowd came seeking Him (John vi. 24). His friends, in genuine anxiety for His health, sought to come between Him and His work, for they said, " He is beside Himself "—lost to any sense of His own interests (Mark iii. 21). When He was not busy with the multitude of suffering, eager, curious or hostile people, He constantly devoted Himself to His main task of training His disciples, of whom at the end He could truly say, " Ye have been with Me from the beginning " (John xv. 27). How He must have hungered for privacy ! How sometimes His thoughts would wander back to the quiet days of Nazareth !

But Jesus did not waste His time in sighing. There were twelve hours of daylight (John xi. 9), and each hour brought its task. In the early days of quiet He had laid in a good store against the time to come, and when the sluice gates of life were opened, and the flood-tide of business came in upon Him, He was ready and

well-furnished for the voyage. The wonderful thing about Jesus is that, "while there is nothing shifting or fitful or simply changing about Him, there is everywhere energy and expansion, thought and emotion, effort and experience, joy and sorrow, loneliness and conflict, interior trial and triumph, exterior defeat and supplantation; particular affections, particular humiliations, homely labour, a homely heroism, greatness throughout in littleness . . . A Personality strong and supreme."* We have seen how in His home life at Nazareth He had cultivated the habit of prayerful meditation. Hence He derived His strength and by this means He maintained it when, for Him, home life had ceased to be.

Jesus knew how necessary it sometimes is to be alone if one is to meet God. The Saints of all the ages bear witness to this—Abraham at Mamre (Gen. xv.), Jacob at Peniel (Gen. xxxii. 24), Moses in the thick darkness where God was (Exodus xx. 19-21), Peter on the house-top at Joppa (Acts x. 9), Paul "away in Arabia" (Gal. i. 17), Augustine at Milan in "the little garden" to which he retired, "that no man might hinder the hot contention wherein I had engaged with myself, until it

* Von Hügel, op. cit., i, p. 26.

should end as Thou knewest," and there hearing the voice " chanting and oft repeating, 'Take up and read,' "*—these, and ten thousand more, have proved the wisdom and necessity of our Lord's direction, " When thou prayest, shut thy door." The need for this privacy arises from the fact that prayer is at once the test and the product of a man's capacity to respond to the Unseen. Things visible have a clamorous voice. All our senses are open to their call. Our material needs always have their feet upon the threshold of our conscious attention, and unless the will guards the door, they are the first across that threshold. Anxieties as they arise pin our thoughts down to earth. Men and women are more real to us than God is, and even the desire to help them, good as it is, may turn our eyes away from Him. All these things are a call outwards, a call which is strengthened if a man has but few resources within himself. Prayer, on the other hand, is essentially an inward experience. We close our eyes that we may see God the better. We " shut the door " on the world that we may open it to Him. However possible it may be to pray in the midst of business or in a crowd, it still

* Confessions, Book viii, 12.

remains necessary that at times we should be "alone with the Alone."*

The Gospel records show that Jesus felt all this, but the privacy He longed for He had deliberately to create. An interesting example of His method of doing so occurs in Mark i. 35. The previous day had been one of strenuous exertion. The early morning had found Him teaching in the Sabbath service of the Synagogue, healing the man with the unclean spirit, disputing with those who blamed Him for so doing. At midday He had retired to Simon's house, to find a woman sick of fever, and He had restored her. At sunset, when the Sabbath was over, "all the city" gathered round the door (verse 33), bringing their sick and devil-possessed that He might heal them. The expenditure of energy which was entailed may be seen in the phrasing of verse 34. "And he healed many that were sick with different diseases, and cast out many devils, and did not allow the devils to speak, because they knew Him to be the Messiah." When it was all over, He and the household retired to a sorely-needed rest. But very early, while it was still dark, He got up, went

* On the necessity for effort, concentration and thought in Prayer, see Von Hügel, op. cit., i, p. 74.

out and away to a lonely place, and there began to pray. The three verbs,* "rose up," "went out," "went away," show with what care He had set the time for waking, and with what secrecy and quiet He stole out of the house into the darkness to keep His heavenly tryst. The fact that He was up long before His friends is shown in the next verse (36), where Simon and the others are said to have "hunted" for him. It all shows how great was His desire for privacy.

That it was the habit of our Lord thus to seek solitude for prayer, is made clear by St. Luke. We may perhaps put two passages together. In ix. 18 we read, "It came to pass, as He was praying alone, His disciples were with Him,† and He asked them saying . . ." Alongside of this put xi. 1. "And it came to pass while he was in a certain place praying, when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray." One may picture the group of men, finding Him at prayer, and standing silent and wondering till His prayer was done. For their manners had improved since the day they "hunted for" Him, and broke in on His devotions with the

* Some MSS. omit "*went out*," others "*went away*." Swete thinks this may be a conflate reading. But may it not be that later scribes missed the very point of the apparent redundance?

† Possibly we should read "fell in with Him."

impatient, "All men are asking for thee" (Mark i. 36). In the course of their apprenticeship to Jesus, they had learned that He had meat to eat that they knew not of (John iv. 32), and business—His Father's business—to do with which they must not interfere. They had learned that His life was not lived merely on the surface, but that it had depths and secrecies of which His prayer habit was an expression.

Others also knew of His practice in prayer. "The Mothers of Salem" brought their little ones to Jesus that He might lay His hands upon them, *and pray* (Matt. xix. 13), and though this request may have arisen simply from a general impression, it makes clear that they thought of our Lord as a "righteous man," whose inspired intercession would have mighty power.* In quite another way even Judas bears his witness. The night before the Passion was a night full of the most solemn and moving experiences, both for the Master and for His disciples. He had broken the Sacramental bread with them—a meal which marked the close of an old order, and the opening of a new. After supper, He had washed their feet, setting up a new and unprecedented

* Moulton, "Religions and Religion," p. 200.

standard of service in the Kingdom of God. He had talked long and earnestly with them about the new beginning of things which He had made in the world, of their own part in carrying on His work, and of the new spiritual endowments which they should receive in His name. Then He had offered a prayer, strangely moving in its intensity, dedicating both Himself and them to the service of the Will of the Holy Father. Then, "having said these things, Jesus went out with his disciples over Kedron's ravine, where was a garden. . . . Now Judas the traitor knew the place because oft-times Jesus had gathered there with his disciples" (John xviii. 1, 2). He knew the place well enough to remember that at night it would be very dark and lonely, so he and his band came "with torches and lamps and arms." From under the shade of an olive Jesus "came forth" (ἐξῆλθεν, verse 4). We see Him rising from His knees, and advancing to meet "the things which were coming upon Him." Not the least of His sorrows, in that hour of agony, would be the thought that Judas had used his knowledge for so base a purpose—but the whole story bears witness to the fact that Judas knew our Lord's habits of seeking so quiet a place and time for His prayers.

The same testimony is borne by the way in which Jesus chose retired spots for His fellowship with God. Night was His favourite time, a mountain or a "desert" His favourite place. Luke dwells on this. He tells more than once how Jesus "went up into a mountain to pray."* Sir W. M. Ramsay holds that this habit of our Lord was known to others beside the disciples, and that the interview with Nicodemus—who knew the Great Teacher's custom—took place at night on the Mount of Olives.† Jesus loved the uplands. They were so wild and bare that all who could do so avoided them, if only for the reason that they were supposed to be the haunt of all kinds of uncanny beings‡. Here then was a fine promise of solitude. Moreover, there is a strange uplift of the spirit for one who looks to the stars from the night-clad heights, and who watches the passing of the darkness before the breaking dawn. Such heights inspired the genius of Wordsworth :—

> "Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!
> Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
> That givest to forms and images a breath
> And everlasting motion, not in vain,

* Luke vi. 12, ix. 28.

† *Expository Times*, xiv, p. 194.

‡ Cf. Mark i. 12, 13, v. 5.

> By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
> Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
> The passions that build up the human soul,
> Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
> But with high objects, with enduring things—
> With life and nature—purifying thus
> The elements of feeling and of thought,
> And sanctifying by such discipline
> Both pain and fear, until we recognise
> A grandeur in the beating of the heart."*

We know how Jesus treated Nature as a Sacrament of God (Matt. vi. 28). We know also how His sensitive heart and mind lay open to the aids which beauty may bring. His love of the solitary heights, and of the clear open air, is in itself a symbol of the clarity of soul-vision which He obtained in His intercourse with His Eternal Father on the hills of God in Judæa and in Galilee.

But a strong soul is not wholly dependent on outward solitude, and we have seen how Jesus could make spaces around Himself in which His spirit could be at liberty.† St. John gives us two pictures of this. At the grave of Lazarus He was pressed hard by the spectacle of human grief and of death. The sorrows of His friends were a heavy burden for Him. Then, turning from it all, "He lifted up his

* "The Prelude," i, 401ff.

† Chapter i, p. 24.

eyes and said, ' Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me," (John xi. 41). Again, the coming of " certain Greeks " in quest of Him, brought before Him the immediate prospect of the self-sacrifice that He must offer for the sins of the whole world. He speaks of it to His disciples —"He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Then imperceptibly He glides into prayer. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy Name" (John xii. 20ff). The reserve which Jesus maintained before Herod and Pilate is another evidence of the way in which He kept open the lines of communication for His soul. It was not a silence of paralysis or of despair. His spirit was crying out for the Living God. He was falling back upon " the things that were within " (Luke xi. 41 R.V.).

We have fifteen or sixteen instances of our Lord's praying.* Those in St. Luke are of especial importance. They occur in every

* In Mark alone (two) : i. 35 and vii. 34. In Matt. and Mark (one) : Matt. xiv. 23, Mark vi. 46. In John alone (three) : xi. 41, xii. 27, 28. xvii. In Matt., Mark, Luke (two) : Matt. xxvi. 39, Mark xiv. 35, Luke xxii. 41, Matt. xiv. 19, Mark vi. 41, Luke ix. 16. In Luke alone (eight) : iii. 21, v. 16, vi. 12, ix. 18, ix. 29, xi. 1, xxii. 32, xxiii. 34 (omitted in some MSS).

period of the ministry, from the Baptism to the Cross. We may take two occasions as typical. "And it came to pass in those days (i.e. after the first encounters with the Pharisaic party on the subject of the Sabbath), that he went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples, and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles" (Luke vi. 12-13). Now this was not in itself a remarkable proceeding. Any Rabbi might choose disciples. But Jesus was choosing more than scholars, He was choosing "messengers," "envoys." Our Lord saw, in the hardening opposition of His critics, the rising of that hostility which would ultimately lead to the Cross. Much had to be attempted before that. The Kingdom of God must be announced throughout the land. Still more must be done after the great sacrifice had been made. The Kingdom of God must then be announced "to the uttermost parts of the earth." These apostles were to be the pioneers of the message. Moreover, the number of them is significant. The sons of Jacob, the heads of the tribes of Israel after the flesh, were twelve. Jesus is looking forward to the birth of the "Israel after the spirit," and of this true and new

Israel the Apostles were to be the fathers and founders (Rev. xxi. 12, 14). This then is the beginning of a great venture, and in preparation for it the Master spends the whole night in prayer to God. One may think of Him confessing His sense of partnership with God, and giving expression to His desire to do the ascertained will of His Father. His prayer shows that He recognises the working of God in history. The old era was closing, a new age was about to open. But the Father was Lord both of the dead and of the living, of the past and of the future, and under His Providential guidance the had-been was to grow into the yet-to-be. We cannot suppose that our Lord would make a mistaken choice of His right-hand men, but equally we cannot suppose that He would attempt that choice apart from His Heavenly Father. But we see in the counsel which Jesus took with God on that night, signs of something greater than mere asking for guidance. It is one more indication of the perfect understanding between the Father and the Son, of the universal significance of the work of Jesus among men, and of the close touch that exists between the purposes of God in heaven, and the processes of history on earth. The fact that Jesus so

prayed shows that these truths formed a guiding principle in His conception of God.

If the choice of the Apostles was thus a matter of such import that it called forth the prayers of our Lord, no less was it urgent that He should pray over the task of their education. To this task He gave Himself and the greater portion of His time. If they were essentially religious men, they were quite untrained. If they were free from the taint of legalism, as found in the Pharisees, they were not free from the temptations of materialism. They certainly were not yet the men to turn the world right side up. So Jesus had not simply to give them teaching, He must also give them vision. He must so breathe into them His spirit that they should become other and greater than they were. Of them it was emphatically true, that if they were to see and enter the Kingdom of God, they must be born again. To bring this about was a supernatural task, and it was when Jesus touched the supernatural that we find Him praying.

Now let us take the education of Peter as representative of all, and this brings us to the second example of St. Luke's account of our Lord's prayers. In his story of the conversation at the Last Supper, Luke tells us that Jesus

said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked* to have you (ὑμᾶς "you," plural, for as Bengel remarks, "He was not content with Judas"), that he might sift you as wheat, but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). It is likely that the Master is thinking of times when He had prayed for Peter, as representing the whole band. In the critical chapter of the narrative (Luke ix. 18) we read that "it came to pass, as He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? Who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, "The Christ of God." The relief and gladness which are evident in the response of Jesus, as given by Matthew, show that He recognised that Peter's confession was a great point gained, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"

* Field (Notes, 76) points out that the aoviat ἐξητήσατο, denotes the granting of Satan's request, as in Job i. 12.

(Matt. xvi. 17, 18). But we know that this was not the harvest of Peter's faith. It was only springtime with him as yet. Down upon the young and tender plant came the sudden frost of the Lord's declaration of His Passion, and for the moment Peter's faith "failed" (Matt. xvi. 22-23), and it was necessary that it should be reinforced. So, "about eight days after these sayings, Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered" (Luke ix. 28, 29). The transfiguration was the heavenly response to that filial prayer, and doubtless the prayer was offered not only for Himself, but for Peter and his companions, that they might receive some vision of what lay behind the veil, of the Purpose which was conceived by the Father in Heaven, and was being worked out through suffering by the Son on earth. We cannot be far wrong in supposing that when He referred at the Last Supper to His prayer for Peter, Jesus had in mind these and other occasions, when He had pleaded for the strengthening of the weak, but real, faith of His disciples. The prayers of Jesus are a proof of His love for men: the measure of their "mighty power" is the measure of the Father's love.

Chapter X

OUR LORD'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

(iv.) Summary

"In the Symposium of Plato, the vision of the Eternal is supremely beautiful; but all the rapture of the soul cannot prevent the Eternal from being cold and impassive. The Eromenon (the object of the soul's love) is never the Eron (the Lover); there is no previous movement down to the soul from the One—no longing for our longing—no "He hath first loved us."—Von Hügel, "Eternal Life," p. 36.

If one reads with care the record of what happened in the guest-room on the night of our Lord's Passion, he will discover a strange mingling of conflict and peace, of sorrow and joy. But the lasting impression is made by the element of joy. The sorrow is there, but it is like a discord introduced by a master musician, that he may resolve it into a harmony which will be deeper and sweeter than it could otherwise be. The early Christians perceived this, and in the catacombs, in the primitive drawings by which they expressed their hope of immortality, they have interwoven the story

of the Good Shepherd with that of Orpheus, to whose music

> "Plants and flowers
> Ever sprung: as sun and showers
> There had made a lasting spring."

Such joy lived in the heart of Jesus; not a surface gladness, but a joy heightened by the resolution of life's discords and sorrows. He understood God. He was sure of His love, sure of His wisdom, sure of His power. His was the perfect peace that comes to one whose mind is stayed on God. It is this joyous certainty of God that gives to Jesus His authority among men. Let us, then, summarise the results of our previous study, and examine the sources of our Lord's assurance.

We come straight to the heart of our subject if we study the passages in which we are told what Jesus said in prayer. They are at most eight in number. Let us set out six of them in order.*

(1) "When certain Greeks" came seeking Him in Jerusalem, Jesus, foreseeing the self-sacrifice He had to make in order to "draw all men to himself," said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause

* The other two are Matt. xi. 25, 26; xxvii. 46.

came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name" (John xii. 27, 28).

(2) At the raising of Lazarus, Jesus "lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me; and I knew that thou hearest me always" (John xi. 41, 42).

(3) In the Garden of Gethsemane, "exceeding sorrowful even unto death," Jesus "fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt." And again, a second time, "O, my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matt. xxvi. 39, 42; Mark xiv. 35, where the opening words are, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee"; Luke xxii. 41).

(4) On the Cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—and

(5) "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 34, 46).

(6) The whole of John xvii.

Three main ideas emerge from a close reading of these prayers of our Lord. He had before Him the thought of the Fatherhood, the Will and the Responsiveness of God.

(1) Jesus thought of God as Father. It is significant that our first five instances commence with the word. It constantly occurs in the

great prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. It opens the petitions of the pattern Prayer. The idea of Fatherhood was uppermost in the mind of our Lord, and herein is the great advance made by Him on the deepest piety of men hitherto. The difference between such a passage as Psalm ciii. 13: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" and our Lord's words, "Your Father knoweth that ye have need" (Matt. vi. 32) is as the difference between a single hill rising from a low-lying plain, and a mountainous country whose average level is higher than the summit of the solitary peak. For, wonderful as the piety of the Old Testament is, no one could say that its most prominent thought is the Fatherly relation of God to all who seek Him truly: whereas the whole burden of the New Testament is, "Ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. viii. 15).

It will be agreed that the New Testament declaration of the Fatherhood of God takes its origin from the teaching of Jesus. The writers of the New Testament had all been in contact, more or less close, with the Master Himself, and what they saw Him to be is the

reason of the impression made on their minds by what He said. This experience of Jesus—apart from any teaching of His—is voiced for us in these fragmentary records of His private prayers. The filial relation of our Lord to the Most High is the explanation of His thought about the world of things and men. He held that Nature, in the widest sense of the term, is the handiwork of God, and that, "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is his" (Job xli. 11)—"his," not only because He made it, but because it bears His character, His stamp and mark. A thread of kinship runs from God Himself done through all the Cosmos to its humblest unit. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father."

In the Fatherhood of God Jesus discovered to men as much as may be known at present of the solution of the mystery of pain and loss. For true Fatherhood implies not simply origin. To stop there is to reduce all to a merely animal level, and to wipe love out of existence. Fatherhood implies discipline, and self-realisation through self-denial is the law of God's Family. He Himself "so loved the world that he gave, (ἔδωκεν—the word of sheer, outright giving) his only begotten Son." The world's standard of happiness—"blessed are the rich, blessed are

the satisfied " is impossible in practice. Surfeit destroys desire, and empties life of all that is worth having. So Jesus said, " blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This law of self-denial leading to self-enlargement, applies everywhere. " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone: but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honour " (John xii. 24-26). There it is, this law of discipline and unselfishness, running back from the seed corn, through man's life, through the life of the Son of God, to God Himself, and it is based on the Divine Fatherhood, which is the first and last thought in the mind of Jesus.*

It is only a materialist philosophy that denies that humanity is the greatest product of Nature. Jesus said that the value of a soul could not be met, though the " whole world "

* If we cannot say that our Lord taught a doctrine of Evolution, here at least is a hint of the continuity in Nature (using the word in the widest sense) which is one of the implications of that doctrine. Cf. chap. vii., above.

were paid in exchange for it (Matt. xvi. 26). The reason for this high estimate of human nature is, once more, based on the Fatherhood of God. This is the meaning of the rather obscure passage in John x. 33-36, in which the argument is that the least of the reasons why Jesus calls God His Father, is that all men have their origin in Him. The argument carries a further implication. Sin arises in renouncing one's filial relation to God. So far from being natural to man and inevitable, the state of sin is a denial of Nature. Jesus never went further in setting this forth than in His words to His opponents in John viii. 42-44, "If God were your Father, ye would love me . . . for he sent me. Why do ye not know my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He . . . stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." Because God is Father, truth and reality are of the essence of things; and denial of truth, "as truth is in Jesus," is a practical denial of the Fatherhood of God, and of the obedience and loyalty which are due to Him. Sin, therefore, is a departure from our true nature; the more a man is given over to it, the less of a man he is, and the greater is the

disorder which he introduces into the scheme of things of which he is a part.

(2) The second thought of God underlying these recorded prayers of Jesus is that of the Divine Will. It is inseparable from the conception of the Fatherhood. Over the world in which Jesus lived, God reigned, and His kingdom is governed by His will. This might easily appear to be a hard Calvinism, but we must remember that the governing will is the will of One who is Father. Guided by His own inherent knowledge of this truth, the teaching of Jesus avoids the Charybdis of sentimentality and weakness, and the Scylla of hardness, remoteness and inelasticity. Hence in all His life we do not perceive any faltering, indecision or uncertainty. Nothing ever confounded Him. He knew that "God worketh all things together," ultimately, "for good." To Jesus the Will of God is *the* good, perfect, and acceptable thing.*

In dealing, above, with our Lord's thought of God as Father, we have touched on what may be called the philosophical side of His thinking. Now, in His idea of the holy will of God, as determining His view of duty and destiny, we touch the ethical side of His

* Rom. xii. 2.

thought. In the last extremity of suffering, Jesus asks, not for His own will, but accepts with the deepest consent the will of the Most High. This thought was regulative of all His life. That which was characteristic of the greatest crisis, was so because in lesser things it had been habitual.

For the best men of our Lord's day, Duty was the discharge of the obligations of a Law, which had been expanded and amplified into a code of endless rules, designed to meet new circumstances as they arose in the growing complexity of life. It was as if one should patch a garment as it begins to wear, and patch again as the fabric gives at a new spot. It became impossible to keep the whole Law, thus understood, so the usual tricks of casuistry appeared, and exceptions became rules. "The Israelite, zealous for the law, was obliged at every impulse and movement to ask himself, What is commanded? At every step, in the work of his calling, at prayer, at meals, at home and abroad, from early morning till late in the evening, from youth to old age, the dead and deadening formula followed him. A healthy moral life could not flourish under such a burden, action was nowhere the result of inward motive; all was, on the contrary, weighed and measured.

Life was a continual torment to the earnest man. On the other hand, pride and conceit were almost inevitable for one who attained to mastership in the knowledge and treatment of the Law. This righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, which looked down with proud thanks to God upon the sinner (Luke xviii. 9-14), and pompously displayed its works before the eyes of the world (Matt. vi. 2), was not that true righteousness which was well-pleasing to God."*

In absolute opposition to these Pharisaic principles, Jesus treated Duty as elastic, and living; as the discharge of a filial relation between the human soul and the Divine Father. In so doing He fulfilled the original purpose of the law, as the Prophets had striven to do before Him (Isaiah lviii). He asked always, not what do rules and customs say? but what is the Will of God in this particular circumstance and situation? It may be objected that this is only another form of the old conflict between outward authority and the inner light. But the opposition is only apparent and not real. It is resolved by the attitude which our Lord maintained in prayer. No rules could apply to His experience in Gethsemane. In His prayers there we have a perfect example of our Lord's

* Schürer, H.J.P., ii. 2, pp. 124, 125.

steadfast faith in the unerring wisdom of His Father—a wisdom that takes in the whole as well as the unit, and works out the ultimate good of the unit in the ultimate blessing of the whole. Here also we see His unswerving obedience to the Law of the family of God to which reference has already been made. He recognised the Will of God as a Fatherly ordering of life, and as such He, the first-born of many brethren, accepted it with His whole heart, and with a deep joy.

That joy was two-fold. In the first place, it was the joy of perfect Fellowship. It is a truism that love and pain often go together. Yet who would reject the love that is in life, because of the pain it sometimes brings with it? Only utter selfishness would stoop to such a thought. Here and now love is our joy! And in the life of Jesus how great is that joy. As He looked at the world He found suffering and sorrow. But the normal life is healthy and glad, and, wherever He could, Jesus healed sickness and comforted sorrow, because He knew that it was "not the will of his Father that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. xviii. 14).

In this active Fellowship with God lies the secret of our Lord's unswerving steadiness

of purpose. If life brought Him sunshine, He was glad. If on the other hand, it brought Him suffering and loss, it only strengthened His sense of the loving support which was extended to Him by His Heavenly Father. Comfort was doubtless pleasant to Him, but comfort was not the first aim of life.* The loss of every material good would have been a far less sorrow to Jesus than even a momentary withdrawal of His Father's Fellowship, and no material misfortune weighed for an instant against the joy which was His in doing always those things which pleased God.

And in the second place, His delight in doing the Divine Will was the joy of One who saw life, not only steadily, but saw it whole. Duty and reward are always coupled in His teaching. He speaks of the reward in Heaven (Matt. v. 12). He tells His disciples not to be afraid of those that kill the body, and *after that have no more that they can do* (Luke xii. 4). He holds out to them the prospect of being with Him in His Father's eternal house of many mansions (John xiv. 1-3). This is not spiritual bribery, it is a law of spiritual life. The Will of God, as set forth by Jesus, represents the permanent principle in the Universe.

* Matt. vi. 31-33.

It is eternal in its living activity, and those who accept and obey it, already share in its eternity. "This is the Will of my Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth in him, shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40). Taken in connection with its context, and especially the two previous verses, this saying holds out eternal life as, not merely the reward, but the necessary consequence, of obedience to the Will of God; just as in Mark iii. 28-30, those who deny the very existence of such Will, and refuse to yield to it, are already spiritually dead, being guilty of an eternal sin. The thought of the larger future not merely bore our Lord up under present grief, but made it His joy to do His Father's Will, even in the midst of His sufferings.

(3) A third element of our Lord's thought about God, as gathered from this study of His private prayers is that of the Divine responsiveness. The first impression we receive in thinking of the way in which Jesus prayed is that of the aliveness of God. In the most mystical of all our Lord's sayings He gives the clue to His thought. "As the living Father (ὁ ζῶν πατὴρ) hath sent me, and as I myself live through the Father, so he that eateth me, this man also

shall live through me" (John vi. 57). The word ζάω (to live) is not the word of mere existence, it is the word for all conceivable fullness of active and intelligent life,* and as used of God it denotes the life of the highest blessedness. And in the passage quoted, our Lord teaches that the Life of God—in this full sense—comes down through the Son to the believer.

So when Jesus prayed, He was conscious that He was speaking to the listening ear of God. "I thank Thee that Thou heardest me, and I knew that Thou hearest me always." Of all realities—and Jesus never deals with anything but reality—God is the greatest. Hence the prayers of our Lord were not always petitions, more often they were just intimacies. Fatherhood is one of the simplest as well as the deepest relations in human life, and when Jesus used the word in His prayers, He surely meant that Love ruled all the intercourse between God and Himself. There is a story of a little lad who came into the study while his father was making his sermon for Sunday. "What is it you want, sonny?" asked the father. Some excuse was given, and the little fellow was told to run away. Twice or thrice

* Trench, "Synonyms," p. 91 ff, and M.V., ζωή.

this happened, and at last the father asked, with perhaps a touch of impatience, "Now what is it you want, my boy?" "Daddy," said the lad, climbing on the arm of the chair, "I don't want anything, I want *you*!"* This love that seeks only love, is simple, but it is fundamental. But what we are concerned to emphasise here is that God Himself meets the approach of love. Only in two instances do the Synoptists record the words of the Divine response. They tell us that when Jesus cried, "My Father," God answered, "My beloved Son."†

In all circumstances Jesus turned to God as to His Father. In the last extremity His cry, "O My Father, if this cannot pass away except I drink it, Thy Will be done," is the cry of a soul driven into the open arms of succouring and understanding Love. This explains the problem of unanswered prayer. In reality, when one is speaking on the highest levels, there is no such thing as unanswered prayer. God is never unresponsive. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;

* "Prayer in the Light of the Fatherhood of God," by C. A. Skinner, M.A. (Cambridge, Heffer & Sons) p. 73. Compare St. Catherine's prayer, "Not for what thou canst give me, O Tender Love, do I ask, but for Thine own Self."

† Mark i. 9-11; ix. 2-8. In both cases Luke adds that Jesus was praying.

knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a fish, will give him a serpent? How much more shall your Heavenly Father give good gifts to them that ask him?" (Matt. vii. 7-11). Turn those central words round—if your son ask you for a serpent, would you give it to him? Then how much more can you rely on God to give you nothing but good, and good that can be recognised as good when you know all. "God may not grant what you ask, but He will never disappoint your trust."

In the last three chapters we have endeavoured to study our Lord's thought about God as seen in His view of the world, His conception of duty, and His habits of prayer. These constitute what we may call the philosophical, the ethical and the emotional, or mystical, elements in His life. In His philosophy we see God impressing His stamp on Nature and on Man. We see how Jesus faces up to the sinister facts of life. Pain, sorrow and death are not glossed over: but we have seen how He thought of God as using these as instruments of a Fatherly

discipline. Since Nature and Man derive their life from God, sin is unnatural, nay, contrary to nature. In His ethical thinking, Jesus shows the Will of God as the ruling principle of the universe, and as the guiding star of the individual. His Will is infinitely wise, and takes into account the true welfare of the unit as well as of the whole. And since the whole includes the world to come, the unit has room to grow into a perfect blessedness which is only begun here. And, finally, in the emotional side of His life Jesus gives us the assurance that God is Father, and that God is Love. All that He is in any realm, He is for us in our little life. All that He ever intended, on the vastest scale of purpose, carries in its bosom blessing and love for each. And no word He ever spoke, whether for the ages or for the humble believer, is void of power.

With this view of God, first shown in the life of Jesus, and afterwards brought home to experience through the gift of the Spirit, is it any wonder that the New Testament is the freshest, most joyous, most triumphant book in the world ?

Chapter XI

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

"What is it that ever separates us from God? It is simply the unlikeness of our own minds to His; their low tastes and disproportioned desires; their pride in what is nought to Him, their indifference to what is all in all; their devotion to the perishable *self* amid the flow of His everlasting love; their slight of the holiness He has secreted in the very heart of things. To remove the estrangement, it only needs that, on His invitation, we set our face the other way with free response. He that is not separated is forgiven."—Martineau, "Hours of Thought," p. 225.

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven."* What a thing to say to a sick man! For saying it Jesus was criticised at the time, and He has been criticised since then. The stricture passed upon Jesus by the men who witnessed the scene, was that He was usurping a power which belonged to God alone. "Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one; even God?" The Pharisees were jealous for the honour of God.

* Matt. ix. 2 (cf. Mark ii. 5, Luke v. 20).

The modern criticism bases itself on the honour of man. It is contended that there is no such thing as sin, and that to offer forgiveness is an insult to the dignity of human nature. It is put less thoughtfully when one says that to offer pardon to a paralysed man is, to say the least, bathos: and to do so when one might have said at once, "Be healed of thy palsy," is to add injury to insult. The two criticisms have to do with the nature of God, and the condition of man, and therefore they reach down to the fundamental things. As a consequence, our estimate of the attitude of Jesus on this subject will determine our estimate of Jesus Himself, and of the nature of His claims.

Let us first deal with the modern question as to the reality of sin. The doctrine of evolution has been used to reduce sin to a vanishing point. According to this teaching, sin is "a fall upward." It is being baffled, to fight better. It is ignorance, and education will cure it. It is bad luck, bad conditions, bad ancestry; and a better environment will soon put it right. But to say that a man can be a sinner, liable to punishment for his fault, is to degrade and insult him.* He is struggling upwards, he is making progress, however

* Cf. Bryce, "Modern Democracies," ii. 576.

slowly, and for this he needs no "forgiveness." There is an element of bitterness in this attitude. The last forty or fifty years have been possessed by a spirit quite contrary to the spirit of Jesus, and the results have fallen heavily on this generation. We can hardly wonder if, while rejecting the idea of man's upward struggle, the youth of to-day feels that it is not to blame for the mess in which the world is. Those who follow Jesus must, above all, have sympathy. He was born into a time not dissimilar to our own. But He was hard on none but hypocrites. He saw the world's sickness and set about to cure it. Let us see now what He thought about the reality of sin.

To say that there is no such thing as sin, is to affirm that there is no standard of right, no freedom to choose the right or wrong, and no God whose will has any bearing on these alternatives. With our Lord's conception of God we have already dealt in the last four chapters. Let us look for a moment at what He thought of a man's freedom of choice. If this were non-existent, if man, however slowly and painfully, is by the laws of his nature inevitably tending upwards, it would have been a beneficent thing to bring some miraculous force to bear on clearing away the obstacles

that impede his path. But Jesus steadily refused to do this. His miracles of healing were, it is true, directed towards restoring the normal balance of life, but they were all dependent on a certain quality of free co-operation in the patient, that is, on faith. Where this was absent we read expressly that the hands of the Healer were tied (Matt. xiii. 58).

It is quite true that Jesus recognised that a man might be handicapped. He might have to fight hard with temptations that lay in his own nature. Hand or foot, or eye, might cause him to stumble. But a man is not blameless if he gives way. "Cut it off, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. It is good for thee to enter into life halt, or maimed, or blind, rather than have two hands, two feet, two eyes, to be cast into the hell of fire."* The strength of this language emphasises our Lord's belief in the possibility of choice. "Strive ('agonise') to enter in at the strait gate"†; there could be no alternative way, and no "agonising" to choose the right one, if there were no free-will to which the appeal or warning could be directed.

* Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

† Luke xiii. 24.

If Jesus regarded men as free to choose, He said that freedom could be lost, and that a man who surrendered to his baser self was liable to be bound hand and foot, and carried whither he would not. In the parable of the Prodigal there are stages in the downward road which lead to the total loss of freedom—"Give me my portion," "he wasted his substance," "he went and joined himself* to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (Luke xv. 15). Jesus explicitly says, "Everyone that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin."† The first choice was free; the resulting habit is slavery. "When a man has thrown a stone, it is no longer possible for him to recall it: still, for all that, it was in his power to throw or fling it, as the original act was in his power. So too, the unjust or licentious person had it in his power in the first instance not to become such, and therefore he is voluntarily unjust or licentious; but when he has become such it is no longer in his power not to be unjust or licentious."‡

* ἐκολλήθη. The word suggests that the prodigal bound himself to work for his bread, and was cheated even of that! (See M.V.)

† John viii. 34.

‡ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics, Bk. iii, ch. vii.

When Jesus came, He found already in existence a very clear conception of what sin is. The Old Testament is, in part, a history of the development of that conception, which runs parallel with the development of men's thought of God. When sin first emerges, it is represented as sheer disobedience to a Divine command, the reason for which was not necessarily understood. The scope of wrong is enlarged in the story of Cain and Abel, where sin against one's brother is seen to be against God also, and entails exile from Him. Sin "crouching at the door," hinders a man from being "accepted" by God (Gen. iv. 7, R.V.). Then follows the era of the Covenants, from Noah to Sinai, in which a definite relation is set up and sealed between God and those to whom He reveals Himself. Under the Priestly legislation that relation was stereotyped, and righteousness became conformity to a code, a matter of correct behaviour. Failure to conform was visited by exclusion from the Covenant-relation, by being "cut off from Israel."

It was inevitable that there should be a reaction against such a commercial interpretation of the life which was acceptable to God, and the result is seen in the protests of

psalmists and prophets against what had become the fetish of sacrifice. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos v. 20-24, cf. Psalm xl. 6-7). The older Covenant had had its day and done its work; and now Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Job mark the climax of the Old Testament teaching. The first of these insists on the necessity of inward religion,* the second on individual responsibility,† and the third shows a soul, unbowed before calamity or criticism, yet humbled to the dust before the voice of the Holy God.‡ Here is a great revival of the sense of God, and of man's duty and privilege in regard to Him. Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams, but one cannot "hearken" if one is far away from God. So obedience and fellowship are the two poles of the godly life, as conceived by the greatest of the Old

* Jer. xxxi. 31-34. (The New Covenant: a crucial passage for the student of the Old Testament.)

† Ezek. ch. xviii.

‡ Job. xlii. 1-6.

Testament saints; and sin becomes a state of rebellion, and of severance from the blessedness of those whom God causes to approach unto Him.

From this height the main tendency of the period between the Testaments is a step backward, the result of which was the narrow legalism of the Pharisees already mentioned.* It was into this environment that Jesus was born. He had been immediately preceded by John the Baptist, whose message required repentance as a preparation for the Kingdom of God. It was a message of conviction, and emphasised the necessity of forsaking the past. The message of Jesus was more positive: it was concerned with the limitless prospects and promises of a future whose beginning is here and now. "The Kingdom of God cometh not as you hope to catch sight of it. The Kingdom of God is in your midst."† Sin, in the eyes of Jesus, is the state of mind which puts one outside that Kingdom. Let us see how He develops this thought.

We must remember that Jesus thought of God as Father. In St. John He is the "Holy Father" (chap. xvii.), and this is in the opening

* See chap. viii.

† Luke xvii. 20. So Moffatt.

words of the Lord's Prayer—"Our Father, holy be Thy Name." The holy Fatherhood of God implies a righteous Will, as well as an all-embracing Love. On this basis Jesus interpreted sin as disobedience to the Divine Will, and rejection of the Divine Love. Sometimes He puts it under the figure of weakness. The Pharisees who challenged Him because He consorted with Levi the publican and his friends, counted themselves "the strong" because they observed the niceties of the Law. These others were "sinners," whose spiritual health was not up to the mark, and who therefore stood in need of the physician.* Or again, in the parables of the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke, He likens sin to loss, either as a simple matter of fact, as in the case of the woman's coin; or as a state arising from lack of intelligence, as in the case of the sheep; or as loss arising from wilfulness, as in the case of the Prodigal. In either case, recovery meant such joy in heaven as showed that the loss was not physical but spiritual.

We have already spoken of the loss of freedom as being the penalty of sin. This is carried out in the interpretation of the parable of the Prodigal Son. But its very title tends

* Matt. ix. 12; Mark ii. 17.

to obscure the fact that there were two sons of the father, and that our Lord directed His teaching not simply to the encouragement and saving of the wanderer, but as a warning to the son who stayed at home (see verse 2). He also had received his "portion," for the father "divided unto *them* his living" (verse 12); and later, in verse 31, he reminds the elder son that "all that I have is thine." But that son had never made use of his freedom. Even if he had "never transgressed a commandment" of his father's, his obedience had been lifeless, unintelligent, perhaps sullen. His reception of his returning brother had been unloving; and the father evidently means, in his words at the close of the chapter, that it was the lack of love in him that had kept back from him the joy of fellowship which ought to have been his. The fact that our Lord directed this parable to the critical Pharisees, who "murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them," shows that righteousness is not wholly fulfilled in external obedience, and that sin may live in the spirit of a man who outwardly conforms to legal requirements.*

* The fact that the Pharisees knew better than they acted lends point to the Parable. See Montefiore, "Spirit of Judaism," in the "Beginnings of Christianity," i, pp. 79-81.

Sin, therefore, in the thought of our Lord, has two aspects. It enstranges man from God and makes impossible the fellowship in which God intended that man should find his own perfection. Hence, in the other aspect, sin dehumanises and enslaves. It reduces a man to a level lower than human. Experience tells us that this is so in the case of such sins as those that spring from sensuality. But Jesus enlarges its action. In His eyes, no sort of sin can ever be refined. Though men

> "Commit
> The oldest sins, the newest kind of ways,"

the effect will be the same. Loss, degradation and slavery are the result.

We return now to the point from which we started. "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." In the light of what has been said, the words are seen to be very far from a mockery. They cut right down to the very heart of the mischief. It is bad to be a paralytic. It is far worse to be a sinner. It is good to be healed. Far better is it to be forgiven, for while the giving back of bodily health is the mending of a shell, forgiveness—forgiven-ness—is the healing of the man himself.

Only twice* do the records tell us that Jesus

* A possible third is John viii. 11, but the textual evidence for the story is doubtful. There are other *implied* instances.

definitely pronounced forgiveness to a sinner; once to a paralytic,* and once to a woman who anointed and kissed His feet.† In each case there are implied preceding conditions and consequent effects. In the instance of the sick man, the words of Jesus are a response to the man's faith. The Master was "speaking the Word" in the crowded house. There is no evidence that the friends of the invalid had any thought save helping him to be one of the audience. He himself must have had a strong desire to hear. The message was like an arrow in the joints of the armour, and the very prominence of his position in the room enabled Jesus to perceive the workings of conviction, penitence and hope in his soul. Instantly the Lord saw that here was a man who was anxious to receive the very thing He had come to give, and there leaped forth the response—"Son, thy sins are forgiven." Very similar was the case of the sinful woman. Her penitence was born of the sense of the difference between her own impurity and the purity of Jesus. He was the best she had ever known—so much better, and yet so much more approachable,

* Matt. xi. 2 (Mark ii. 5, Luke v. 20). The story is told with such fulness and with such agreement of detail, that it is evidently part of the earliest common tradition.

† Luke vii. 48.

than Simon and his friends. So, loving His purity, and hating her own sin, she comes and anoints His feet. He is a strange man who can read this story without emotion, and we do not wonder that all the springs of pity and of power were touched in Jesus. "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven"; and the joy of that forgiveness is shown in her deed of "much love."

Who then *is* this, that even forgiveth sins? The answer lies deep in the truth of the Incarnation and the Atonement, and to it we must briefly return. But let us see what our Lord means to convey in forgiveness. Sin, He said, is estrangement from God, arising, it may be, from hostility, or disobedience, or indifference. Its effect is loss and enslavement. Or, again, sin lies in the wrong will and in the denial of love. It brings, of necessity, the adverse verdict of the Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right. But what if the will changes? What if a sight of Divine Love lost should cause a real sorrow for its loss, and a desire, however hopeless, that it might be regained? What if conscience, aroused and afraid, should bring a man creeping to God's feet, saying that if only he could get back to God, back to love, back to a pure desire,

he would indeed be a man again, as God meant him to be ?

It is when these things awake in the innermost of will and wish, that God says, " Thy sins are forgiven ! " and freedom replaces slavery, love destroys estrangement.

Jesus spoke this word of pardon. Had He any right to do so ? We may leave aside His answer to the Pharisees (Mark ii. 9-11), though it was conclusive. His right is that which the Heir exercises when He speaks in the name of the King. The Incarnation at least meant this, that the Heir has come among us to convince us of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, and to assure us that any penitent desire for God will not rebound on us in mockery. " God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses " (2 Cor. v. 19). Could not any other be commissioned by God to pronounce the reconciliation through forgiveness ? Let him that is without sin among us say the first word.

Who then is this that even forgives sins ? If one part of the answer is given in the Incarnation, it is completed in the Atonement. Jesus Himself said little about His redeeming death, but what He said is of the utmost importance. " The Son of Man came to give

his life a ransom for many." He spoke of his blood as shed for the remission of sins. He Himself knew the meaning of the words, but it was not possible for those who heard them to understand, until He had been "proved to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). Then, and not till then, did they perceive that this self-sacrifice of the Son was at once the proof and the appeal of the Father's Love. They knew already that human love could give its life for its friends. Not till they were illumined by the Spirit could they know that Divine Love would give its life for its enemies. "Scarcely for a just man will one man die: peradventure for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God commendeth his own love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."

Finally, we must return once more to the paralysed man. Wherein does the miracle lie here? Was it in the cure or in the forgiveness of his sin? Not necessarily in the cure, for the processes of psychotherapy, new in theory but old in practice, achieve like results to-day. Many medical men are curing bodily

disorders by getting the mind, sometimes the "unconscious mind," relieved of a burden. No doctor would call such a cure a miracle.

On the other hand, the Church has always recognised that a conscience troubled by sin lays a very heavy burden on the sinner's mind. In such practices as those of Confession and Absolution, some have sought to relieve the penitent soul. But no priest would say that it is he who forgives sins. He would be the first to acknowledge that to be the prerogative of God alone, and that forgiveness is, in that respect, a miracle. But Jesus claimed direct authority on earth—not a commission—to forgive sins. In the case of the paralytic this word came first. It was effective. It cast off the burden from the man's conscience, because it was a Divine Word. When Jesus spoke to him again, He said, "Rise up," and the word found response in the hitherto enchained will.

He, therefore, who can forgive sins, has the authority of God. In the last analysis, this is the very heart of the authority of Jesus.

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